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University of Wisconsin

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HELM'S A'LEE  
HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS FUNCTION  
IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY,  
1861-1941

by  
F. Donald Scovel

A Thesis in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS  
(Journalism)

at the

University of Wisconsin  
1968

ABC  
S4326  
FS28

"It is known among the military, but less widely among the general public, that the object of war is determined by policy; that policy in turn is determined by statesmen, and that these statesmen are strongly influenced by public opinion. But it has not been generally appreciated that for this reason public opinion may give to strategy its initial direction and may color and even decisively influence the outcome of a war."

... J. M. Scammell

## Preface

Little admitted, seldom supported, and rarely recognized for what it was, the United States Navy's adoption of a formal public affairs function followed a stormy evolution. Participation in international expositions, publicity campaigns on behalf of recruiting, cooperation with the Navy League of the United States -- all played a part of in its development. Despite popular misconception, the public affairs function did not grow, nor was it fostered, in a vacuum. It evolved because of the social and political forces which demanded a responsive and responsible voice in government.

In any assessment of a nation's power, it is essential to begin with the temper, the will of her people. Military and naval forces form but an extension of that will, which, in operation, constitutes national purpose and dictates national policy.

Factors which influence that will, then, are of great importance in determinations of national power. In this nether land of the indefinable, it is known that events and their perception are primary considerations affecting popular thought and action. It is in this influence on public opinion that the public affairs function in government, and in the United States Navy, has its greatest meaning.



In the history of the development of the public affairs function in the United States Navy, the "turning mark" at which the Navy shifted its course from early attempts to influence legislators to the mature concept of direct responsibility to the nation and the people came in the Civil War. It was here that, in the jargon of the sailing ships, "the helm was put a'lee."

While there is a wealth of literature written on naval subjects, there is a dearth of it dealing, even tangentially, with the subject of public affairs in the United States Navy. Even such an outstanding volume as Rear Admiral Julius A. Furer's, Administration of the Navy Department in World War II, contains but a paragraph, in 950 pages of text, touching on the Office of Public Relations.

The objective of this study has been to document the development of the public affairs function in the United States Navy from its earliest traceable beginnings. In setting the boundaries of this study, primarily it was necessary to consider aspects directly affecting the development of the public affairs function while noting other aspects of lesser bearing such as Navy actions with, and reactions to the mass communications media. Insofar as these operations were found to have exercised influence on the functional development of

public affairs in the United States Navy, they have been included. Also included in the same sense of relevance to this development was the tide of public opinion, reflected by the media and in Congress, and the movements which set political forces in motion -- the preparedness movement of 1915-16, and the peace movement in the years, 1922-1928.

Events were significant in the development of the public affairs function in the period under study. The Washington Naval Limitation of Arms Conference, 1921-22, and the bombing tests upon Navy ships conducted by General Billy Mitchell and a group of Army and Navy fliers, for instance, were events which led the Navy to establish an information function within the Office of Naval Intelligence in order to mount a counter-propaganda offensive. Events, too, by which the need for a strong Navy could be dramatized were pertinent to the functional development of public affairs activities: the threats of the commerce raiders in the Civil War and those of the German submarines in World War I, and the cruise of the battleship fleet around the world, 1907-9.

Executive leadership by the President and support either offered or withheld by Congress, too, had deep implications for Navy public affairs operations throughout this study.

Interservice rivalries too had continuous effects.

Because of their nature, however, little has been written which would establish a link between interservice actions and reactions, and the influence of this stimulus remains obscure.

There were many such areas of obscurity in dealing with such a politically oriented investigation: the role of the Secretaries of the Navy in their private meetings with individuals of the press and with officials of the Navy League; the influence of the President upon service actions carried by the Secretary of the Navy from decisions made in Cabinet meetings; the relationships between the Secretaries and the Committees of Congress; the role of patronage, and the influence of spoils, and the relationships of Navy public affairs with the Committee on Public Information in World War I and, later, with the Office of War Information in World War II -- all remained outside the area of documentation.

Also of importance to this study were the roles played by individuals such as John W. Jenkins, the first manager of the Navy News Bureau. Though Jenkins conducted the day-to-day work of operating the Bureau, the policy decisions of what was released to the public and the manner and language of the releases seems to have been provided by Josephus Daniels himself. No documentation establishing the true relationship between the two was

discovered and the activities of Jenkins remained obscure.

The parameters of this study suggested many other areas of interest and pertinence which justified investigation. Among these were: a study of the public affairs activities of Gideon Welles, and those of Josephus Daniels and Frank Knox, all of whom were former publishers who made significant contributions to the public affairs function in critical periods of the Navy's history; a study of the preparedness movement of 1915-16; and a study of Navy participation in exhibits, expositions and in international fleet reviews. Following 1941 were yet other subjects: the operations of the Office of Public Relations, whose beginnings were set in the period of this current study; the combat art program; and a survey of the censorship function in periods of national tension. These were but a few of the many parts of the total picture concerning public affairs in the United States Navy. The end point of the study was set at the establishment of the Office of Public Relations in May, 1941, whose subsequent operations were a part of the history of World War II.

The methodology of this study centered upon a research plan which focused on two areas of primary-source interest: the records of the Office of the Secretary of the Navy, National Archives, and the Navy Department records maintained by the Division of Naval

Histories, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department. Additional material was sought in the files of the Bureau of Navigation, National Archives. The research in Washington was conducted in two ten-day periods during the summer, 1967.

The guide to research used in the period to 1918 was Harold and Margaret Sprout's, The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776-1918. Without its superb documentation the project would have been infinitely more difficult since few, if any, records predating 1900 carry indexes which reveal the slightest trace of public affairs activity. Indeed, the whole problem of research through primary-source documents has been the difficulty in dealing with great volumes of letter press, typewritten and manuscript materials to which no index in the area of public affairs has been compiled.

The task would have proven impossible without the continued interest and active support of many who are fully qualified to call themselves historians. To each of them, and for whatever this study is worth, I owe a great debt. In guiding my first halting probes in shoal waters I must thank Admiral E. M. Eller, Director of Naval Histories Division, Navy Department, himself a former Chief of Information; his personal secretary, Miss T. I. Mertz, whose knowledge of the

intricacies of naval histories has never ceased to amaze me, whose sailing directions have caused me to avoid innumerable uncharted reefs, and whose patience has never worn thin despite any number of distress calls spread throughout a year of research; the staff in the Navy Department Library led by Mr. F. S. Meigs, and also the staff of the Operational Histories Division.

Thanks, as well, are due and tendered to the staff of the National Archives, especially to Mr. Harry Swartz who spent unnumbered hours in obtaining the unobtainable and Mr. Lee Saegesser who pointed to channels through the shoals.

To a special group of individuals whose personal experiences with the Office of Public Relations and its predecessors, the Public Relations Branch and the Information Section of the Office of Naval Intelligence, contributed immensely to my understanding: Admiral (retired) Bernard L. Austin, Admiral (retired) John B. Heffernan, Miss Helen Philibert and Admirals Leland P. Lovette and H. R. Thurber, both of whom passed away before the research project could be completed; my sincerest appreciation.

Debts of gratitude must also be accorded to Captain R. S. Jones, who got the project rolling on Navy tracks; Captain Pickett Lumpkin, Captain Edmund L. Castillo, and Captain William Thompson who contributed

generously of both their time and understanding of the development of the public affairs function.

Special thanks are due, too, to the thesis committee who gave more than a full measure of patience, guidance and understanding: Professors Scott Cutlip, Richard Joel and James Fosdick.

To my family, my deepest appreciation. It was they who bore the burden...

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## CHAPTER I

The Beginnings of Public Affairs  
In the United States Navy:  
The Civil War and Beyond

## CHAPTER I

The history of Public Relations in the United States Navy follows closely the evolution of the function within government. In the creation of the United States Navy itself can be seen the marshaling of political support by the expedient of spreading the contracts for goods and services over as large an area and among as many individuals and companies as possible.<sup>1</sup> The manner of obtaining the needed support caused the naval historians, Harold and Margaret Sprout, to conclude, "...it would seem a fair inference, from official utterances as well as from circumstantial evidence, that the Administration aimed to popularize the Navy in a sufficient number of states and communities, to insure legislation continuing it on a permanent basis."<sup>2</sup>

Of more marked influence upon public and Congressional opinion, however, was the press of international events. The depredations of the Barbary Corsairs and actions of the French privateers which later erupted into the Quasi-Naval War with France combined to give proponents of an effective naval force leverage enough to enact the hotly debated Navy Act of May 27, 1794, establishing the United States Navy.<sup>3</sup>

With the election of Thomas Jefferson and the triumph of the Jeffersonian Republican party came a drastic change in naval strategy--a period of retrenchment and passive

coast defense.<sup>4</sup> The cutback was in marked contrast to the active building program espoused by the Navy's first Secretary, Benjamin Stoddert<sup>5</sup> and occurred in the critical period preceding the War of 1812.

Failure of the Jeffersonian naval strategy was punctuated by the nearly complete blockade of coast of the United States from Long Island Sound to New Orleans. The futility of the gunboat defense policy and the bankruptcy of a militia system for national defense was demonstrated to the American public in the burning of Washington.<sup>6</sup>

The function of Public Relations in the United States Navy was carried forth by the Navy's political leadership. In the Civil War, however, can be found the first halting steps taken by the Navy itself to provide the public with information about its actions.

In the main, news of the Navy throughout the war was dependent upon battle reports. Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, himself a former newspaper editor,<sup>7</sup> would hand over the communiques to reporters in Washington.<sup>8</sup> Not all of the reports were necessarily handed over, however, for the dictates of military security made certain disclosures inappropriate. In news of failures of the Union Navy's monitors in connection with the September, 1863, attempts to capture Fort Sumter and Charleston harbor, release of information regarding deficiencies in the iron-

clads was stricken by Welles from the reports, "... (it did not appear wise) to make any deficiencies in those vessels prominent in the official reports which were to be published... if monitors are weak in any part, there was no necessity for us to proclaim that weakness to our enemies..."<sup>9</sup>

On several occasions Welles was distressed to find the Army garnering a major share of the limelight in actions which hinged on naval forces. He instructed Admiral Porter to make certain his battle reports were in ahead of those of the military commanders. Porter did at his next opportunity and the Navy, spurred by interservice rivalry, scooped the Army on news of the Battle of Vicksburg. On July 7, 1863, Welles wrote, "... Admiral Porter's brief dispatch to me was promptly transmitted over the whole country... I am told, however, that (Secretary of War) Stanton is excessively angry because Admiral Porter heralded the news to me in advance of General Grant to the War Department... He craves to announce all important information." <sup>10</sup>

#### The Navy and the Press

It was common practice for correspondents to travel with Union armies and, to a lesser extent, with those of the Confederacy. News directly from reporters with the ships was rare. The difficulty of communicating with their papers was the most demanding reason for the high disparity

between news from the front and the lack of it from blockade and river squadrons.

A notable exception to this pattern was a New York reporter, B. S. Osbon,<sup>11</sup> who accompanied the abortive relief expedition to Fort Sumter. The expedition was led by Gustavus V. Fox, later appointed the first Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

It was also Osbon who might, with some justification, be called the Navy's first public relations officer. Through certain connections, he won with Admiral Farragut a combination job as Signal Clerk and Secretary on the Flagship Hartford. In that position he was an eyewitness to the battle with the forts and the capture of New Orleans.<sup>12</sup> He wrote and distributed the story to the New York papers.

By the summer of 1864, Osbon had published a handbook on the Civil War histories of ships of the Union Navy. It was an extremely useful reference work for news editors as well as for contemporary commentators.<sup>13</sup> By that time Osbon had established himself as a sort of clearing house for news about the Navy. He wrote Sunday articles which he sold to a group of 18 newspapers and claimed, at least, to have so established the first news syndicate in America.<sup>14</sup>

One of his methods of operating this syndicate landed him in trouble in November, 1864. While the Powder Boat Expedition against Fort Fisher<sup>15</sup> was being prepared, Osbon

obtained the details of the operation from Admiral Porter and wrote an advance for his newspaper subscribers with the understanding that it was not for use until after the expedition had been completed.

On hearing a rumor that the attack had taken place, a Philadelphia editor printed the story prematurely, giving the enemy abundant information prior to the attack. The editor reportedly was arrested and the paper closed.<sup>16</sup>

Following the successful attack more than a month later, Osbon was put under arrest and clapped into the old Capitol prison in Washington until nearly the end of the war.<sup>17</sup>

#### Information Versus Security

One problem reporters encountered when they embarked in Navy ships was that of censorship. They found that Flag Officers of the Navy could censor their copy or, for that matter, oust them without the story.<sup>18</sup>

The problem of censorship was not exclusive to the Navy, nor could the desire for censorship be laid to the ultraconservatism of naval officers. The problems of informing people through a public press without imparting useful and sometimes essential information to an enemy are myriad and worthy of several volumes. In a civil war, these problems became more complex.

Perhaps the most damning of comments on intelligence

available in the press came from the log of the most successful of the Confederacy's commerce raiders, the CSS Alabama. Captain Semmes, upon capture of the merchantman SS Manchester bound from New York to Liverpool, studied a batch of newspapers found on board and wrote, "I learned from them where all the enemy's gun boats were, and what they were doing...Perhaps this was the only war in which the newspapers ever explained, beforehand, all the movements of armies and fleets to the enemy."<sup>19</sup>

Correspondents were not the sole source of news leaks of security information. Naval officers corresponding with the press caused Flag Officer S. F. DuPont to issue an order<sup>20</sup> prohibiting such correspondence to his South Atlantic Blockading Squadron. On several occasions, violations of his order resulted in disciplinary action against the offenders.

Rear Admiral David D. Porter, commanding the North Atlantic Squadron, also found it necessary to restrain his officers from corresponding with the press and issued a similar general order. It reflected a generally held view of the professional military dealing directly with the press, "...The Commander in Chief is the person to communicate what it may be proper for the public to know, and it will be done in official form. Writing for the press is not the right kind of employment for an officer

of the Navy..."<sup>21</sup>

Information leaks in the Charleston campaign caused Admiral John Dahlgren to write to Secretary Welles, "... There are probably no means upon which the enemy has so relied for information as this insane propensity for making public the most valuable items."<sup>22</sup>

#### For an Informed Public

Meanwhile, the depredations of the Confederate commerce raiders, coupled with the threat of completion in England of the Confederate-contracted ironclads, set the eastern seaboard of the Union into near panic.<sup>23</sup>

The demand for warships to defend the harbors, to chase the raiders, and to patrol the fishing grounds and shipping lanes exerted extreme pressures on the President and the Secretary of the Navy.<sup>24</sup> Metropolitan editors, shipowners, mayors of port cities, governors of seaboard states and members of Congress urged, and none too gently, a departure from sound naval strategy of firm and unrelenting blockade in favor of helter-skelter pursuit of private or individual interests.<sup>25</sup>

Apart from the strategy of the war, there were several painfully learned lessons just as studiously ignored at war's end. One of these was the portent of an aroused but ill-informed public opinion and its resultant effect upon sound naval strategy. Just as the Navy had



repeatedly found that it could not build, equip and man a fleet in times of emergency but had to build, maintain and train one over the years, it became just as unmistakably clear that it could not expect public understanding of its mission and strategy without taking action to cultivate and foster that understanding.

For nearly a generation following the Civil War the Navy languished and regressed.<sup>26</sup> With little public interest in or concern for the Navy of the United States, there was no impetus for propagation of an information base to support naval programs, if, indeed, there were any naval programs.

#### Exhibits to Inform the Public

Yet another field of public relations activity was opened for the Navy by presidential fiat in 1874. President Grant, noting the upcoming exhibition in Philadelphia celebrating the 100th anniversary of United States independence, issued an executive order directing participation of the executive departments of the federal government,

...it is desirable that from the executive departments of the government of the United States, in which there may be articles suitable for the purpose intended, there should appear such articles and materials as will, when presented in a collective exhibition, illustrate the functions and administrative facilities of the Government in time of peace and its resources as a war power,

and thereby serve to demonstrate the nature of our institutions and their adaptations to the wants of the people...<sup>27</sup>

The public relations intention of that order was carried forth in the direction of many exhibits subsequently participated in by the federal government.<sup>28</sup>

In Philadelphia, eight departments took part in the exhibit: Treasury, War, Navy, Interior, Post Office, Agriculture, and the Smithsonian Institution. The Navy contingent representing the Secretary of the Navy on the Exhibit Board was headed by Rear Admiral Thornton A. Jenkins -- in those days a figure of considerable rank for presentation of the Navy's message to the public.

On the exhibition trail, federal participation, including that of the military services, continued through to the turn of the century and beyond.<sup>29</sup>

Perhaps the Navy's most elaborate exhibit was made as a part of the World Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893.<sup>30</sup> A ship model of lathing was built on a brick foundation set on piles driven into Lake Michigan. It was open for touring and featured realistic interiors and exteriors, actual arms and equipment, and had fully dressed mannequins at various stations throughout the "ship." The total Navy exhibit occupied nearly 50,000 square feet of space and cost the Navy \$125,468. A full-time crew was detailed to set up and maintain the exhibit and a part of them, at least, actually lived in quarters

in the bottom-bound "ship."

Aside from this rather small and fundamental activity there was little effort to interpret the Navy to the American public at large in the years described as "The last years of the old Navy."<sup>31</sup>

Naval progress of the 80's was advanced by the vigorous leadership of Secretary of the Navy William H. Hunt. One of the more notable tactics in Hunt's campaign to rebuild the Navy was to bring together selected Senators, Representatives and naval officers for discussion of naval policy. It marked a significant departure from previous norms of professional action in the political realm and helped overcome mutual prejudices and misunderstandings between Congress and the Service.<sup>32</sup>

#### The Navy's Oracle

In 1890, an obscure Professor of naval history and tactics at the Naval War College published a book entitled, The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783. The acclaim accorded Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan's theories of command of the sea propelled him to immediate fame.<sup>33</sup>

Mahan had no connection with an information function in the Navy. Yet his books and articles,<sup>34</sup> coming as they did at a propitious moment in naval affairs formed, in the opinion of the naval historians Harold and Margaret Sprout, the basis of an enlightened naval policy in the United States.<sup>35</sup>

### In Times of Tension

When Theodore Roosevelt was appointed Assistant Secretary of the Navy in 1897, he brought to the Navy Department not only a thorough understanding of the use of naval forces in international affairs, but, also, a remarkable feel for the public press and knowledge in how to use it.

Perhaps the best example of Roosevelt's sagacity in press relations is given in Charles Brown's, The Correspondent's War, when the long delayed and eagerly sought message from Admiral George Dewey reporting the Battle of Manila Bay arrived in a Navy Department stuffed with some fifty news-hungry reporters.

One of the officials on the scene was the Under-Secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt... Reading the message over the shoulders of decoders, Roosevelt took it in instantly. While (Secretary of the Navy John D.) Long was telephoning (President) McKinley for permission to make an announcement to the press, Roosevelt was giving out the news to reporters. Then Long emerged from his office, smiling as he faced the crowd to read in his musical voice the great news from Manila. He did not know that correspondents had already scribbled out their stories and messenger boys even then were pedaling wildly on their bicycles to the telegraph offices. Long's carefully censored version of Dewey's report appeared in the afternoon papers alongside the more detailed account given by Roosevelt...<sup>36</sup>

The complete story told the colorful details, and there was no animosity shown toward Roosevelt for having provided it.

The war with Spain gave the United States Navy a startling demonstration of the effects of public opinion upon strategy.

Naval command of the Caribbean was the strategic key to the war in the Western hemisphere.<sup>37</sup> To counter the challenge of the Spanish Squadron under Admiral Cervera, Admiral William T. Sampson, Fleet Commander in the Caribbean, proposed two strategically sound plans: to take Havana before the arrival of Spanish reinforcements; or to seize San Juan and subsequently locate and destroy the Spanish fleet upon its arrival in the West Indies.<sup>38</sup>

Sampson was given neither option. Public clamor fired by news reports, and congressional and group pressures compelled the Navy Department to direct him, instead, to confine his operations to blockade and cautious bombardments. The Navy Department further withheld some of the best ships of Sampson's fleet and organized them into a "Flying Squadron" which was held at Hampton Roads against the obscure possibility of naval raids on the eastern seaboard of the United States.<sup>39</sup>

The approach of war built an increasing alarm. The Navy Department created a second defense force of several cruisers. This Northern Patrol Force was distributed along the coast from Maine to Virginia.<sup>40</sup>

The news that Cervera had sailed from the Cape Verde

Islands on a Westward course brought panic bordering hysteria along the Atlantic coast as the days passed without further intelligence.<sup>41</sup> Congress directed the Navy department to mobilize the naval militia of the States. This Naval Auxiliary Force manned a makeshift "fleet" of Civil War monitors, and armed yachts and tugs, and took up defense stations from Maine to the Gulf.<sup>42</sup> The resultant, nearly total disorder caused the naval historians, Harold and Margaret Sprout to comment,

Only with the greatest difficulty did the Navy Department prevent the unreasoning and preposterous panic from forcing a complete disruption of the fighting fleet, and the scattering of its units, to guard two thousand miles of coastline against wholly improbable, if not utterly impossible, raids by Cervera's decrepit cruisers.<sup>43</sup>

The role of the press in the Spanish-American War is unique in the annals of reporting.<sup>44</sup> The cooperation afforded correspondents by military and naval commanders was nearly limitless.<sup>45</sup> There were reporters with Dewey, dozens embarked in ships on blockade stations off Cuba, and a fleet of them in dispatch boats darting about the ships, then flying off to Key West to file their stories.

In the main, it was Navy Department policy to deal candidly with the newspapermen who were the representatives of the general public. In his diary Secretary of the Navy Long expressed the sentiment well after being

beseached for additional details on the sinking of the Battleship Maine in Havana Harbor, "...the newspapermen cluster like bees about me...They are gathering information for the public, and it is hardly worth while to be impatient with them when they are really the avenues through which the public, very properly, gets its information."<sup>46</sup>

Coverage of naval action off Cuba, if not accurate, was certainly not wanting for number and activity of correspondents. The German Kaiser was reported to have been highly amused at the thought of the American fleet, accompanied by an entourage of press dispatch boats, awaiting an engagement with the Spanish.

While the press "fleet" caused only a few problems to the maneuvering of Sampson's ships, its presence caused more than a few in the realm of military security. Press reports on fleet movements and possible intentions were relayed the same day to Madrid. The technological progress made in telegraphy had vastly complicated the problem of military security causing censorship units to be established at Key West, Washington, and at seven cable offices in New York.<sup>47</sup>

Naval commanders furnished whatever information they could, "...Admiral Sampson fully recognized the demand of the country for the fullest information which could

properly be furnished, and placed no impediment in the way of this being supplied, beyond what military necessity demanded."<sup>48</sup>

Such were the faint beginnings of public relations in the United States Navy. The Spanish-American War had reinforced other trends developing in the society. As the United States stepped upon the international stage as a budding new power, her citizens were demanding more responsibility from their government. A part of the government's responsibility lay in keeping its citizens advised of its actions. At the turn of the century, the need for public relations was becoming apparent to the more astute naval leaders.



<sup>1</sup>E. B. Potter and Chester W. Nimitz, eds., Sea Power, A Naval History (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), 189, hereafter cited as Potter and Nimitz, Sea Power, and Harold and Margaret Sprout, The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776-1918, (5th ed.) (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966), 34-36. Hereafter cited as Sprout, Rise.

<sup>2</sup>Sprout, Rise, 35-6.

<sup>3</sup>Potter and Nimitz, Sea Power, 188-89, and Sprout, Rise, 28-32.

<sup>4</sup>Sprout, Rise, Chapter 5.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 41-42.

<sup>6</sup>Potter and Nimitz, Sea Power, 223-4

<sup>7</sup>Welles was editor and part owner of the Hartford Times from 1826-36. He founded the Hartford Evening Press in 1856

<sup>8</sup>Richard S. West, "The Navy and the Press During the Civil War," Naval Institute Proceedings, 63:38 (1937). Hereafter cited as West, The Navy and the Press.

<sup>9</sup>Howard K. Beal, ed., Diary of Gideon Welles (3 vols.) (New York, W. W. Norton, 1960), 295-6. Hereafter cited as Beal, Diary.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., Vol. 1, 365.

<sup>11</sup>West, The Navy and The Press, 38.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 39.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 38, and B. S. Osbon, Hand Book of the United States Navy (3 vols.) (New York, W. W. Norton, 1960).

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 39. Although Osbon was one of the first, experimentation with syndicates came as early as 1841. There was a newspaper syndicate in operation in Wisconsin by the end of 1861. See, Elmo S. Watson, A History of Newspaper Syndicates in the United States, (Chicago, 1936), 1-6.

<sup>15</sup>Admiral David D. Porter, USN, The Naval History of the Civil War (New York, The Sherman Publishing Co., 1866).

<sup>16</sup>Although there are multiple references to press disclosure of the plans of the expedition, there are no indications as to which paper or to government actions to close the paper.

<sup>17</sup>West, The Navy and the Press, 39. Also referred to in Howard K. Beal, ed., Diary of Gideon Wells (3 vols.) (New York, W. W. Norton, 1960), 2:205-6, 209. Welles, however, uses the name Osborn. Other primary references use Osbon, which is believed correct.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 38. For additional Flag Officer comment on censoring press copy see, Captain Dudley W. Knox, USN, (Ret.), Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion, (30 vols.) (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1927) series 1, under entry--press, passim.

<sup>19</sup>Civil War Naval Chronology: 1861-65 (6 vols.,) (Navy Department, Naval Histories Division, Washington, GPO, 1961), 2: October 11, 1862, p. 102.

<sup>20</sup>General Order Number 8, February 18, 1862. See, Union Confederate Navy Records, Ser. 1, Vol. 12, 546-7.

<sup>21</sup>General Order Number 13, October 21, 1864, Ibid., 10:576.

<sup>22</sup>Admiral Dahlgren to Secretary Welles, October 7, 1863, Ibid., 15:23-25

<sup>23</sup>Sprout, Rise, 162-63.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>For an example of these many attempts to influence naval policy see Beal, Diary, passim. The agitation of Welles was especially great against the more sensational New York press, see, Diary, 1:435.

<sup>26</sup>Sprout, Rise, 165-182 and Potter and Nimitz, Sea Power, 338-41.

<sup>27</sup>United States Centennial Commission; Report of the Board on Behalf of United States Executive Departments at the International Exhibition Held at Philadelphia, Pa. 1876 (2 vols.) (Washington, GPO, 1884), 1:7. The full report details federal participation including the exhibits of both the War and Navy Departments, which were significant.

<sup>28</sup>Among them the Chicago Exposition (1893), the Nashville Exposition (1897) and the Buffalo Exposition (1901).

<sup>29</sup>Ibid. It is perhaps ironic that President McKinley was assassinated at the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo.

<sup>30</sup>The Navy Department exhibit is described in: Rossiter Johnson, A History of the World's Columbian Exposition (4 vols.) (New York, D. Appleton and Co., 1898), 3:498-500.

<sup>31</sup>Following the Civil War until the beginnings of naval reconstruction in 1881. See Sprout, Rise, Chapter 11.

<sup>32</sup>Sprout, Rise, 185-7 and Thomas Hunt, Life of William H. Hunt (Brattlesboro, Vermont, E. L. Huldreth and Co., 1922), quoted therein.

<sup>33</sup>Sprout, Rise, 202-3 and C. C. Taylor, The Life of Admiral Mahan.

<sup>34</sup>These articles, appearing between 1890 and 1897, were subsequently collected into a single volume, A. T. Mahan, The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future (Boston, Little, Brown and Co., 1897).

<sup>35</sup>Sprout, Rise, 205-8.

<sup>36</sup>Charles H. Brown, The Correspondent's War: Journalists in the Spanish-American War (New York, Scribners, 1967), 196-201. Hereafter cited as Brown, The Correspondent's War.

<sup>37</sup>Rear Admiral French E. Chadwick, USN (Ret), The Relations of the United States and Spain: The Spanish-American War (2 vols.) (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), 1:57, hereafter cited as Chadwick, Relations of U.S. and Spain; G. S. Clarke "Naval Aspects of the Spanish-American War," Brassy's Naval Annual, 125 (1899); and Sprout, Rise, 230-241.

<sup>38</sup>Chadwick, Relations of U.S. and Spain, 1:63, 88.

<sup>39</sup>Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Navy to the President of the United States, (various years), (1898), 3-4. Hereafter cited as Annual Reports of Secretary. Chadwick, Relations of U.S. and Spain, 1:62-63.

<sup>40</sup>Annual Reports of Secretary, (1898), 5.

<sup>41</sup>Sprout, Rise, 235, and Edward N. Doan, "Newspaper Responsibility for the Spanish-American War," unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin (1928).

<sup>42</sup>Annual Reports of Secretary, (1898), 19-20.

<sup>43</sup>Sprout, Rise, 235. For additional descriptions of this panic, see, Theodore Roosevelt - an Autobiography (New York, MacMillan Co., 1913), 214-16; L. S. May, ed., America of Yesterday (Boston, The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1923), 185, hereafter cited as Mayo, America of Yesterday, and Henry Pringle Theodore Roosevelt: A Biography (New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1931), 179.

<sup>44</sup> Brown, The Correspondent's War. Also any of the better works on the history of Journalism.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. vii.

<sup>46</sup> Long, America of Yesterday, 165.

<sup>47</sup> Herbert W. Wilson, The Downfall of Spain: Naval History of the Spanish-American War (London, Sampson Low, Martor & Co., Ltd., 1900), 429-30.

<sup>48</sup> Chadwick, Relations of U.S. and Spain, 1:221.

## CHAPTER II

The Influence of Theodore Roosevelt:  
The Turn of the Century

## Chapter II

The war with Spain had pushed the United States into the international arena of world politics. The turn of the century presented this country with overseas holdings. The Philippines, Guam, American Samoa, and Hawaii - each a significant acquisition in the larger view of an aggressive mercantile policy in the Far East. The occupation of Cuba and Puerto Rico seemed to heighten the need for an isthmian canal to link the Atlantic and Pacific.

For the Navy, the new responsibilities that these possessions demanded were enormous. The strategy of Mahan, which had been sufficiently advanced to cope with problems of the Spanish-American war, were capable also of including the advanced position of U.S. naval posture required by these far-flung commitments.<sup>1</sup>

Advancing technology and new construction had advanced the Navy of the United States to a point where its sea forces were comparable to those of European powers, save, of course, those of Britain.<sup>2</sup> In large measure, this was due to the active appropriations in each of the years 1898-1900. Partly through the popularity for the Navy which had carried over from the war, and partly through the continued stress in international affairs this impetus continued until 1901 when

Congress refused to authorize any ships at all.<sup>3</sup>

Naval policy following the war, as it had many times in the past, reverted to the pre-war modus vivendi and little thought was given to new responsibilities demanded of the Navy. With the reelection of McKinley in 1900 and the continued secretaryship of Long, there was every indication that the Navy could look forward to a continued policy of drift.<sup>4</sup>

In September, 1901, an assassin's bullet took the life of the President and sent striding onto the international scene a man infused with the importance of naval strategy to national security and fully conversant with naval problems, Theodore Roosevelt.

In his first message to Congress, President Roosevelt revealed the philosophy which was both to define and direct<sup>5</sup> naval policy throughout his administration,

...The American people must either build and maintain an adequate Navy or else make up their minds definitely to occupy a secondary position in international affairs, not merely in political, but in commercial matters. It has been well said that there is no surer way of courting national disaster than to be "opulent, aggressive and unarmed."<sup>6</sup>

It was characteristic of the man to link the national interest with national security and to state both in terms of the wants of the people of the nation.<sup>7</sup>



Roosevelt began immediately to build the Navy -- a drive which did not slacken until 1905. Within four years Congress had authorized ten first-class battle-ships, four armored cruisers, and seventeen lesser ships with the whole totaling over a quarter million tons displacement.<sup>8</sup> In the same period naval appropriations had climbed from \$85 million to \$118 million, a peacetime record.<sup>9</sup>

Roosevelt's leadership in the building drive was characterized by pressure on Congress, backed by direct appeal to the people of the nation. Reflecting the Commander-in-Chief's ambitions, the recommendations of the General Board and of the Secretary of the Navy pushed for increased construction in an effort to gain comparability with the navies of Europe.<sup>10</sup>

Navy reaction to press comment became evident in this same period. In July, 1904, the Chief Clerk of the Navy engaged a New York clipping service for, "...notices referring to matters connected with the Navy, special articles, editorials, etc..."<sup>11</sup> Here was some positive feedback.

#### Personnel Needs

With the increase in fleet tonnage, the requirement for greater numbers of personnel in the Navy placed additional emphasis upon recruiting. Somewhere

in this period,<sup>12</sup> the Navy found it helpful to develop a publicity organization as an aid to recruitment.

In 1902 Roosevelt paid special attention to the Navy's personnel needs in his annual message to Congress.<sup>13</sup> In 1905, this same message had become almost a plea.<sup>14</sup>

For the Navy's part, recruiting went on at an accelerated pace, but not always without its problems. One recruiting team in the midwest repeatedly found adverse and non-factual stories and comments about the Navy appearing in the local press just prior to its scheduled visits. These occurrences caused special mention in the Secretary's annual report to the President,

...the Bureau (Bureau of Navigation, predecessor to the current Bureau of Naval Personnel) believes that a more thorough and more widely diffused knowledge of the conditions of life in, and opportunities afforded by, the naval service is the best remedy against unjust and harmful criticism.<sup>15</sup>

The type of criticism to which the Navy objected can be seen in the Sauda, Colorado, Mail in noting the arrival of a Navy recruiting party, "...If your son is an incorrigible and you think he will either go to the gallows or to the penitentiary, send him to the Navy."<sup>16</sup> Taking up the gauntlet, the Army & Navy Journal

replied,

The representative, fair-minded newspapers of the United States could render a most helpful service to the country by reminding their readers on every proper occasion that the Army and Navy are open only to bright reputable, cleanly and ambitious young men, that they are not reformatory institutions, but organizations in which character, manhood and merit are indispensable to advancement.<sup>17</sup>

Whatever the problems of Navy recruiters in gaining publicity for their drives, some success must have attended their efforts. In November, 1907, the Bureau of Navigation received a letter from a publicity organization in Rochester, New York, offering to conduct a publicity campaign on behalf of Navy recruiting. The Bureau graciously turned down the commercial offer replying,

...The methods now being employed in obtaining recruits for the Navy have proven efficient and the results are very satisfactory...It has been the Bureau's experience that interesting news articles are eagerly sought after and there has been no difficulty in having published any items of interest regarding the naval service.<sup>18</sup>

#### Considerations of Image

Sensitivity to the image of the Navy and its men was not confined to recruiters. In 1905, an employe of the Navy Department was dismissed for refusal to carry out a contract to let a part of his house to a

sailor because, "...his wife feared her 'social position' would be affected if a man in sailor's clothes were seen going into or coming out of her house." The incident was considered important enough to be noted in the Secretary's annual report to the President.<sup>19</sup>

A similar but previous happenstance supposedly gave rise to the Navy's first newspaper in Newport, Rhode Island. In 1901, a yeoman from the naval base reportedly saw the sign in a downtown store window, "Dogs and Sailors Keep Out." He was repulsed when he tried to enter forcibly and returned to the base to vent his frustration by publishing an underground newspaper decrying the outrage.<sup>20</sup>

#### Information With Purpose

United States Naval Intelligence at the turn of the century consisted of but seven officers in the Navy Department and four naval attaches overseas. One of its annual publications, Notes on Naval Progress, was an interesting reference work for comparative statistics on the world naval powers. In January, 1902, the New York Sun noted praise for the work by a correspondent of the London Times,

...The Admiralty conceals its knowledge even from the House of Commons...even when the Parliament insists on obtaining a return of the fleets of the Powers, the bare return is given without any attempt at summarizing the

results, or any endeavor to make the information furnished of practical use for purposes of discussion. We have to go to the American Naval Intelligence...to obtain a summary of this information.<sup>21</sup>

A modicum of press praise was accorded to the information function in the Navy, "...the difference (between British and American intelligence) is wholly to the credit of our small intelligence staff."<sup>22</sup>

#### Press Tours

In the informal organization of the period, information was imparted in a number of ways. One such instance was a tour of the Navy Yard at Puget Sound for seventy-five members of the Utah Press Club in June, 1902.<sup>23</sup> Sponsored jointly by the Press Club of Seattle and the Commandant of the Yard, the guests were given a list of "rules" to be followed. Some of them were enlightening:

Rule 2. Refrain from using unnecessary violence to persons not in government employ. Take a fall out of anything in uniform, but abuse non-combatants only after returning home, and then only on the editorial page.

Rule 3. Do not pull the tail of the bull terrier belonging to the Commandant. Said terrier has no sense of humor, but has been brought up to scrap first and leave arbitration to the United States Senate.

Rule 4. Do not think that because you are a taxpayer and therefore a part owner of the United States Navy, that you can carry the Oregon home for a souvenir.

Rule 8. Coming from the interior, you may with perfect safety observe to the officers of the Wisconsin that the Oregon is a wonder. But don't get angry if an officer replies that you don't know a camel from a cruiser.

Rule 11. Don't ask if the band can play "Suwanee River." They can play anything from the "Dead March in Saul" to table stakes in the guard house.

Rule 12. Walk on the grass, the walks, the regulations or on anything else except the water.

The "rules" were made by the Yard Commandant, Captain William T. Burwell.

#### The Navy League

In December, 1902, a potentially formidable and certainly less inhibited agency for publicity was founded outside the confines of government, the Navy League of the United States.<sup>24</sup> The League was formed by men who believed, "...the American people would have to be educated to appreciate the connection between sea power and America's new international responsibilities. Thus educated, they would exert pressure upon Congress to provide with generosity and promptness for a suitable peacetime Navy."<sup>25</sup>

The extent of the Navy's involvement itself in formation of the League is not known. The Navy's Office of Naval Intelligence had been following closely the the operations of similar organizations in Europe.<sup>26</sup>

The actual proposal for an American league was made at an annual meeting in New York of the Naval Order of the United States in November, 1902, presided over by Rear Admiral Albert Barker, Commandant of the New York Navy Yard.<sup>27</sup> Barker urged creation of the League as an adjunct to the Navy "to enlighten (the) people...on naval matters and tell them what a Navy means to the country and what it ought to mean to them."<sup>28</sup> Approval for the group was obvious.

In the League's creation was an organization which could bring to the attention of the American public and to Congress the salient issues which demanded a first-class naval force and could challenge, as well, the anti-preparedness propaganda of the peace groups.

To bring its message to the public's attention, the League planned to use several devices.<sup>29</sup> It foresaw speakers touring throughout the country; issuance of press releases and information pamphlets to selected editors, Congressmen and opinion leaders; wide distribution of the League-produced magazine and local sections meeting regularly to discuss naval matters and celebrate commemorative occasions.<sup>30</sup>

On October 6, 1906, the Navy League section in Philadelphia created one such occasion which was called, "Navy Day." Later in its history the Navy League would

hold an annual celebration on October 27, the birthday of Theodore Roosevelt. This first gathering on "Navy Day" attracted over 2,000 members to Atlantic City where the featured speaker, Secretary of the Navy Charles Bonaparte, vigorously attacked "false and misleading statements by peace groups" and a hostile press.<sup>31</sup>

In his annual message to Congress in December, 1906, Roosevelt requested sweeping personnel changes for the Navy but only one capital ship per year.<sup>31A</sup> Here was a place where the League might use its influence to effect. The Navy, the League's magazine, called for the League to act.<sup>32</sup> In February, the League convention met in Washington and endorsed the President's program. Roosevelt's address to the delegates who called at the White House revealed his hopes for concerted League action,

...The President and the Congress both need to be reminded that it is necessary for the sake of America to encourage the upbuilding and the maintenance of the United States Navy...I want all of you in your respective homes, through the organs of public opinion, by your influence upon your representatives at every branch at Washington to see that the needs of the Navy are not forgotten in the future. The Navy has no one to speak for it save those who speak for it because of their devotion to the honor and the integrity of the United States; and I ask that you and those like you make your voices heard for the general welfare amid the din of voices that speak only for special interests.<sup>33</sup>



For all of the expectations visited upon the League, its initial performance proved disappointing. Hamstrung by financial difficulties, defied by public apathy for the subject of increasing the nation's arms, opposed by both peace groups and an increasingly hostile Congress, the League's operations until 1908 fell far short of its potential.<sup>34</sup>

Membership in, and support for the League had been expected from industrialists and wealthy businessmen. The expectation never materialized. American industry and commerce were thriving and a big navy might have led to international tensions and ultimately to war. The disruption of commerce would have far offset the short term gains from increased defense spending.<sup>35</sup>

#### Recommendations For A Bureau of Information

In December, 1905, the President of the General Board, Admiral George Dewey, recommended to the Secretary that the Navy and the Army consider seeking legislation which would prohibit the publishing, in time of war or when war was imminent, "...any information of a military nature which is not furnished for publication by the War or Navy Departments."<sup>36</sup> The recommendation presupposed, but did not specifically address the details of an information organization.

Following a conference with War Department officials, Secretary Bonaparte replied that the time was

inopportune for such legislation. He did consider the recommendation appropriate, however, in time of national peril and directed the Board to draft a bill for submission at a later date.<sup>37</sup> He admonished the Board to carefully consider, "...any measure which would seriously and injuriously affect the legitimate business of the press or interfere with the natural, and indeed patriotic desire of the general community for prompt and reliable information respecting public affairs in time of war."<sup>38</sup>

The General Board returned the proposed legislation to the Secretary in April.<sup>39</sup> Contained therein was a provision for presidential designation of officers for special duties in the preparation and release of military information, including the creation of what might be called a Bureau of Information.<sup>40</sup> The proposal evidently was shelved to await a propitious moment, but thinking had progressed to an active interest in the problem in times of emergency if not in times of peace.

#### Exhibitions and Naval Reviews

For European naval powers, the 1890's were marked by international naval visits and naval reviews in great races for prestige and popular support.<sup>41</sup> The United States abstained from these extravaganzas until 1902

when President Roosevelt's invitation brought Germany's newest battleships into New York for display. The following year, four American cruisers under Rear Admiral Charles S. Cotton appeared in succession at Marseilles, Kiel and Portsmouth, England. In 1904, Roosevelt sent six battleships and eight cruisers to tour and call at the ports throughout the Mediterranean.<sup>42</sup>

In 1905, fleet visits were exchanged with the French, and the British Navy sent a contingent of six battleships to New York, where, interspersed with American ships, they formed a line in the Hudson stretching from Fifty-fourth Street to Grant's Tomb.<sup>43</sup> In the same year Roosevelt inaugurated a series of naval reviews in front of his home on Long Island Sound where, according to Hart, "...the President's lawn was packed with important guests. Wanting a good press for the Fleet, Roosevelt asked journalists to the parades to get them 'under the naval spell.'"<sup>44</sup>

In 1906, the President sent eight battleships to the Algeciras Conference which was meeting to settle the Moroccan dispute between France and Germany. The ships next went to the International Exposition at Bordeaux and then on to Portsmouth for the British-Russian pageant.<sup>45</sup> The ships had just time enough to return to the United States for the April, 1907,

convening of the Jamestown Exposition

The display, according to Collier's Weekly, "surpassed anything the Western Hemisphere had ever accomplished in that line."<sup>46</sup> Squadron's of ships representing thirteen nations joined the entire Atlantic Fleet in Hampton Roads on public display.<sup>47</sup> General visiting aboard the ships to afford the public the opportunity to examine the vessels, parades, inter-ship boat races and other sporting events -- all were included in the plan to familiarize the public with and to popularize the Navy.<sup>48</sup> Navy participation in the St. Louis Louisiana Purchase Exposition,<sup>49</sup> where a full-scale mock-up of a U.S. Navy man-o-war was constructed, paled when compared to the full exhibition of the real thing. Navy recruiters were on hand to take advantage of the spectacle.

#### The Cruise of the Great White Fleet

As the ships of the fleet rode at anchor in Hampton Roads, a rumor cropped up that the Jamestown display was nothing compared to what was coming -- a 'round the world cruise of the battle fleet.

The news of the cruise was announced by Secretary of the Navy Victor Metcalf in an interview in San Francisco in July<sup>50</sup> Editorial and Congressional reaction to the announcement was immediate. Along the eastern seaboard voices were raised against stripping the

Atlantic of its first line of defense in favor of a "Training Cruise" to the Pacific.<sup>51</sup>

The Chairman of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, Eugene Hale of Maine, went so far as to declare that the fleet could not go because Congress would refuse to appropriate the necessary funds. Roosevelt countered the threat by replying that the Navy had sufficient funds to carry them to the Pacific and that if Congress should decide to leave them there, that was Congress' problem.<sup>52</sup>

Reaction in the international press fanned the flames in the Yellow Journals of the United States.<sup>53</sup> Meanwhile, the Navy made preparations for the cruise and Roosevelt selected the journalists who would accompany the ships and tell the story the President wanted told.<sup>54</sup> According to Hart,<sup>55</sup>

...favorable accounts could be expected from writers who were also naval officers. The high-circulation Harper's Weekly was the outlet for the stories of Lieutenant Commander Philip Andrews and Marine Captain Henry C. David...Correspondents from big New York papers and the press associations (however) presented a problem. Men like R. H. Patchin, N. Rose, R. Zogbaum, J. R. Crowell, R. Berry and R. Bennett insisted that they were reporters, not publicity men. To win berths on the cruise, however, all had to agree that every word would be passed upon by duly appointed naval officers.

On December 16, 1907, to tunes of brass bands and

news by the wire services clicking word of their departure, the sixteen battleships which comprised the Great White Fleet weighed anchor and proceeded slowly in column past the Presidential yacht Mayflower and out to sea.

Extravagant publicity had preceded the fleet's departure. It continued to accompany its every move as it sailed around the Horn into the Pacific, called at coastal ports and then proceeded on to the Far East, thence to the Mediterranean and finally returned home.<sup>56</sup>

The effect upon world opinion left in the wake of the ships was significant.<sup>57</sup> United States and foreign press which had criticized the cruise at its inception heralded its success upon its termination.<sup>58</sup> The tributes, however, were not without reservation.

"Publicity," said Hart, "was, in itself, a part of the voyage's history -- and also a source for it."<sup>59</sup> The accounts of the correspondents who accompanied the ships can attest to the statement. The newspapermen, needing colorful stories to file, "...were creating what, in the jargon of the future, might be called an image."<sup>60</sup> The "image," was not without its effect, however, and "veteran officers were beginning to understand the rudiments of public relations."<sup>61</sup>

One of the immediate effects was in the boost to recruitment attributed by the Secretary of the Navy

to the publicity surrounding the voyage.<sup>62</sup> The overall popularization of the Navy was more important.

As Roosevelt later recalled, "...My prime purpose was to impress the American people; and this purpose was fully achieved...No single thing in the history of the new United States Navy has done as much to stimulate popular interest and belief in it as the world cruise."<sup>63</sup>

That particular effect to dramatize a cause had been forecast by the London Spectator before the cruise began,

...All over America the people will follow the movements of the fleet; they will learn something of the intricate details of the coaling and the commissariat work under warlike conditions; and in a word their attention will be aroused...we are sure that, apart from increasing the efficiency of the existing fleet, this is what Mr. Roosevelt has in mind.<sup>64</sup>

Certainly that was true. If the effect did not get the message across to Congress in the waning days of Roosevelt's administration, perhaps it wasn't lost on the American public at large.

<sup>1</sup>Harold and Margaret Sprout, The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776 - 1918, (5th ed.) (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966), 250-257, hereafter cited as Sprout, Rise, and E. B. Potter and Chester W. Nimitz, eds., Sea Power, A Naval History (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), 378-387, hereafter cited as Potter and Nimitz, Sea Power.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>G. C. O'Gara, Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of the Modern American Navy (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1943), 12.

<sup>6</sup>Messages and Papers of the Presidents (Burlington National Lit. Edition), 6667. Hereafter referred to as M&P.

<sup>7</sup>See for instance, annual messages to Congress 1902-1907.

<sup>8</sup>Roosevelt's estimate of relative U.S. naval strength in 1905 placed the United States second only to Great Britain and France. See Bishop, Roosevelt, Vol. 1. 366.

<sup>9</sup>Sprout, Rise, 260-1 and Potter and Nimitz, Sea Power, 382-3.

<sup>10</sup>Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Navy to the President of the United States, (various years), 1902-5), hereafter cited as Annual Reports of Secretary.

<sup>11</sup>Files of the Office of the Secretary of the Navy, National Archives, Record Group 80, file 7546. Letter from Office of the Secretary of Navy to Henry Romeike, Inc. dated 7 July, 1904. Similar offers from clipping services had been consistently turned down between 1898-1903.

<sup>12</sup>Development of a formal publicity bureau within the recruiting organization is obscure. Many references point to activity in this area in the period 1902-05. The first reference to a formal publicity bureau with headquarters in New York is contained in Annual Reports of Secretary, (1910), 304.



<sup>13</sup>M&P, 6762-3

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 7380-2

<sup>15</sup>Bureau of Navigation Addendum to Annual Reports of Secretary, (1905), 15.

<sup>16</sup>Army and Navy Journal, July 15, 1905, p. 1239:2. Hereafter cited as Journal.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>"Publicity" letter to Secretary of Navy dated November 30, 1907, and Bureau of Navigation reply dated December 4, 1907, Navy Department file, Office of Secretary of Navy, National Archives, Record Group 80, RI 27416.

<sup>19</sup>Annual Reports of Secretary, (1905), 11.

<sup>20</sup>The origins of the Newport Navallog are related in the April 14, 1967 edition, p. 4. They are based upon an interview between the editor of the Navallog and a personal friend of the founder, Yeoman Fred Buenzle. Encouragement for continuation of the paper was said to have come from President Theodore Roosevelt.

<sup>21</sup>Journal, January 25, 1902, p. 529:2. Other statistical compilations of Naval Intelligence proved useful to the Navy League as well.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>An account of the event is contained in, Journal, June 28, 1902, P. 1095:2-3.

<sup>24</sup>An extremely well documented history of the Navy League in its first fifty years of operation (1902-1952), Armin Rappaport, The Navy League of the United States (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1962). Hereafter cited as Rappaport, Navy League.

<sup>25</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 2 and Office of Naval Intelligence, General Information Series No. 20, "Some Navy Leagues," (Washington, 1901). Among the more successful of the European groups were those of Great Britain and Germany.

<sup>27</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 3.

<sup>28</sup> Rappaport, Navy League, 3.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Journal, October 13, 1906, p. 170:2-3. The London section of the Navy League also sponsored in 1906 a Washington's Birthday Ball. Presiding was U.S. Ambassador and New York Tribune publisher, Whitelaw Reid. See Journal, April 14, 1906, p. 912:2.

<sup>31A</sup> M&P, 7403-7450.

<sup>32</sup> Rappaport, Navy League, 12.

<sup>33</sup> Quoted in Journal, March 2, 1907, p. 724:2.

<sup>34</sup> Rappaport, Navy League, 6-15.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>36</sup> Recommendation of the General Board, No. 441, dated December 20, 1905. Navy Department files, Federal Records Center, Alexandria, Virginia. Contained in records of the Office of Information, Philibert Papers.

<sup>37</sup> Secretary of the Navy letter 21109 dated February 9, 1906 to the President of the General Board. Navy Department Files, Federal Records Center, Alexandria, Virginia. Contained in records of the Office of Information, Philibert Papers.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> See General Board to Secretary of Navy No. 441, dated April 26, 1906. Navy Department files, Federal Records Center, Alexandria, Virginia. Contained in records of the Office of Information, Philibert Papers.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 2, and Section 3 of proposed bill.

<sup>41</sup> Robert A. Hart, The Great White Fleet; Its' Voyage Around the World, 1907-1909 (Boston, Little, Brown and Co., 1965) Chapter 1. Hereafter cited as Hart, Great White Fleet.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Hart, Great White Fleet, 21.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 22

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>For a detailed account of the planning for Navy participation see, Annual Reports of Secretary, (1906), 429-30. The planning board consisted of Rear Admiral (retired) P. F. Harrington, the Chief of Staff of the Atlantic Fleet, and the Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Navigation.

<sup>49</sup>For a description of Navy participation in St. Louis see Journal, March 12, 1904, p. 740:1-2.

<sup>50</sup>Metcalf announced the Atlantic-to-Pacific portion of the cruise. The full plan to circumnavigate the globe was not announced until after the fleet's departure from Hampton Roads in December. There is also some evidence that the announcement by Metcalf was a slip, stealing the thunder from Roosevelt. See, Thomas A. Bailey, Theodore Roosevelt and the Japanese-American Crises (Gloucester, Massachusetts, Peter Smith, 1964), Chapter 10. Hereafter cited as Bailey, T.R. and J-A Crises.

<sup>51</sup>Bailey, T.R. and J-A Crises, 225-7; Theodore Roosevelt - an Autobiography (New York, MacMillan Co., 1913), 568, hereafter cited as Roosevelt - Autobiography, and Annual Reports of Secretary, (1908), 5-6.

<sup>52</sup>Bailey, T. R. and J-A Crises, 225-7 and Roosevelt Autobiography, 558.

<sup>53</sup>Bailey, T. R. and J-A Crises, Chapter 11.

<sup>54</sup>Hart, Great White Fleet, 41 and Theodore Roosevelt to T. Newberry, Assistant Secretary of Navy, August 10, 1906, Roosevelt Papers quoted therein.

<sup>55</sup>Hart, Great White Fleet, 42-3.

<sup>56</sup>For a description of the publicity operation relative to the cruise in both the United States and foreign press see, Hart, Great White Fleet. An

evaluation of the cruise's effects is contained in Bailey, T. R. AND J-A Crises, Chapter 12; Sprout, Rise, 284-5 and in William R. Braisted, The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1897-1909 (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1958), 223-31.

<sup>57</sup> Three volumes containing newspaper clippings collected from around the world relative to the cruise are in the Navy Library, Navy Department. Collector unknown.

<sup>58</sup> Hart, Great White Fleet, 296-7.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., xi

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>62</sup> Annual Reports of Secretary, (1908), 349; (1909), 320.

<sup>63</sup> Roosevelt Autobiography, 593, 595.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 595.

### CHAPTER III

Building for War and Establishment of  
the Navy News Bureau

### Chapter III

With the departure from the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt and the succession of William Howard Taft, the question arose whether the naval policy of Roosevelt would carry over to his chosen successor.

There was little question that Taft's foreign policy bordered on isolationism.<sup>1</sup> The import upon naval policy, which is so inextricably tied thereto, remained obscure. Taft's steps on the naval scene seemed to be governed by fear of a failure to keep up in the naval race with Europe.<sup>2</sup> The result was that the ship construction program advanced by Roosevelt generally was continued by Taft.<sup>3</sup>

The naval policy of the administration did not enjoy Congressional support, however, and the recommendations of the Navy General Board for four battleships in both 1910 and 1911 were pared to two by the President in an effort to gain legislative support.<sup>4</sup>

Seeking to take his cause directly to the people, Taft staged dramatic fleet reviews in both San Diego and New York which provided platforms for public appeals by both the President and his Secretary of the Navy, George von Lengerke Meyer. The reviews were timed for November, 1911, just prior to the opening sessions of Congress. The efforts appeared for naught, however, for the Democratic-dominated House Naval Affairs Committee reported a naval appropriation

bill without provision for even one battleship.<sup>6</sup> The administration's proposals were in considerable difficulty.

#### Arousal of the Navy League

The Navy League, stirred to new life, began support for a continued building program in 1909. In February, following the convention held at Fortress Monroe to welcome home the fleet from its world cruise, the League released a resume of its convention platforms to the press of the nation. By March, ninety-five articles had appeared in fifty-eight newspapers.<sup>7</sup>

In April, the League's new secretary, Henry H. Ward, set out, with approval of the Board of Directors and the informal endorsement of the Secretary of the Navy, to publish for the first time a comprehensive booklet enumerating the planks of the League's platform.<sup>8</sup> Entitled, "Patriotic Reasons for the Navy League of the United States," it was intended for release to editors and opinion leaders. Initial distribution was made in July to 5,000 carefully chosen individuals.<sup>9</sup> Before year's end an additional 20,000 were distributed as well as 40,000 pieces of three other pamphlets.<sup>10</sup>

In 1910, League action was active in combating propaganda of the peace groups. In the upcoming debates on the naval appropriations bill of 1910-1911, the

League foresaw a major test. Two weeks before the vote was taken, the League sent letters to members in thirty-three states with a listing of Congressmen known to be opposed to or not favoring the increased budget. The letters urged members to put pressure on their Congressmen and to agitate in their local press.<sup>11</sup> When the bill passed the House, the League stood to share in some of the credit.

By the time the bill had gone to the Senate in May, 1910, the League had held its annual convention and made wide distribution of yet another pamphlet urging increased appropriations for ship construction. The Senate measure passed increasing the number of ships authorized by the House.<sup>12</sup> While credit could not be laid solely to League efforts, the success attending their labors in pushing for greater preparedness did serve to increase their self-confidence and offer some assurance that League drives could expect tangible results.<sup>13</sup>

At the end of the fiscal year on March 30, 1911, League officials could look back with considerable gratification. Membership had grown to 7,000; over 80,000 publicity releases had been issued with a high incidence of their use; and membership sections had become more active.<sup>14</sup> The League was able to receive the congratulations of the Secretary of the Navy with



a feeling of accomplishment.<sup>15</sup>

The League's annual convention was held in Washington in February, 1912. Guests attending included the President, the Secretary and Assistant Secretaries of the Navy, and the Chairmen of the House Appropriations, Naval, and Foreign Affairs Committees. The delegates endorsed the President's two-battleship program in spite of the fact that the Democratic caucus in the House had gone on record in January against any capital ships.<sup>16</sup>

In March the League sent letters to its entire membership urging support for the building program and sent like information to about 200 selected editors suggesting editorials or news items. Press response was gratifying as a large number of newspapers came out in favor of the two-battleship program.<sup>17</sup> The bill, however, cleared the House as it had been reported out of the Naval Affairs Committee -- without provision for a single capital ship.<sup>18</sup> The Senate, however, inserted the two-battleship provision, and the bill went into conference.

While the Senate-House committee was meeting, the League continued to press for the program. It sent a circular to 250 small country newspapers, to twenty larger papers and news services and to each Senator and Congressman. The Committee compromised on one capital ship. The bill of 1912, moreover,

provided for a personnel increase of 4,000 sailors and 400 marines and for the construction of six destroyers, eight submarines, and four supply vessels. The total bill represented the largest naval appropriation in American history to that date.<sup>19</sup>

As the lame-duck Congress met to consider funds for the 1913-14 budget, the League was setting out again to provide support for an increased building program designed to keep the United States Navy on a footing comparable to that of the major European powers. The Navy League of the United States had begun to perform with effect.<sup>20</sup> It did so with the active cooperation of the Navy.

It is noteworthy that, in the Taft administration, Congress significantly increased naval appropriations some sixty million dollars over the last four years of the Roosevelt administration.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, ship construction was curtailed. The difference lay essentially in pork-barrel legislation and patronage.<sup>22</sup>

#### Restriction on Information

In November, 1911, a British magazine published<sup>23</sup> a lengthy and detailed article on the construction and operation of United States' submarines. The Navy Department began an immediate investigation to determine who was responsible for the release of security information.

While later investigation pointed to a civilian employe at the Fore River Shipbuilding Company,<sup>24</sup> Secretary Meyer issued an order in December virtually stifling the free flow of any information to the mass media.

General Order No. 139  
December 16, 1911

No person belonging to the Navy, or employed under the Navy Department, shall convey or disclose by oral or written communications, publications, or any other means, except as may be required by his official duties, any information whatever concerning the naval or military establishment or forces, or concerning any person, thing, plan or measure pertaining thereto, or any information that might be of possible assistance to a foreign power, without the express approval of the Navy Department, and all articles containing detailed information concerning the naval establishment or forces shall be submitted before publication to the Navy Department, Division of Operations of the Fleet, Office of Naval Intelligence for scrutiny.

George von Lengerke Meyer  
Secretary of the Navy<sup>25</sup>

The test for the order was not long in coming. The following month, an explosion in the Navy Yard at Mare Island, California, brought immediate inquiry from the press. The Yard Commandant, acting under General Order 139 refused to give out information concerning the incident. The Vallejo Evening Chronicle, through its representative in Congress, complained of the repressive measure. Replying to Representative J. R.

Knowland, the Assistant Secretary outlined the reasons for the Commandant's refusal to give out the information. In a separate letter to the Yard Commandant, The Secretary of the Navy amplified the intent of his instruction, "It was not the Department's intention...to forbid giving information of no military value to persons or newspapers: it is left to the judgment of commandants and commanding officers to decide what properly may be withheld."<sup>26</sup> Regardless of the intention, the statute remained on the books without modification.

The schizophrenic nature of the Navy's desire on the one hand to win support through the publicity activities of the Navy League and on the other to deny the press access to worthwhile subjects of interest seems anomalous. In February, 1912, while cooperating with the League's convention in Washington, the Secretary of the Navy turned down a request from Gilson Gardner of the Washington Bureau of the Newspaper Enterprise Association for permission to place a correspondent on board a flotilla of torpedo boats during a cruise down the west coast.<sup>28</sup> The reasons for the denial were, "hardship of the cruise and considerations of security." The Secretary did offer, however, to have one of the officers of the flotilla

write the article.<sup>9</sup>

In actuality, news of the Navy had traditionally emanated from the Navy Department; specifically from the Office of the Secretary. In February, 1910, F. R. Low, the editor of Power magazine, had written directly to the Navy's Bureau of Steam Engineering asking to be put on the mailing list for news made public.<sup>30</sup> The Chief of the Bureau replied that "information...given out from any Bureau of the Navy Department must, under the order of the Secretary, come directly from his office..."<sup>31</sup> Low's second letter to the Secretary was answered by the Assistant Secretary,

The Department keeps no mailing list for the purpose of distributing news items. Any news for the press is given out verbally to various newspaper correspondents and to the representatives of the various press associations, who make it a practice of calling at the Department daily for the purpose of gathering news in the manner stated.<sup>32</sup>

While it isn't obvious why the first reply couldn't have given Mr. Low the information he needed, it is clear that the function of informing the public through the mass media was firmly vested in the Secretary of the Navy. Perhaps, with a view toward press interest, the incident inspired the Secretary to stir the Bureaus for more information, "...with a view to supplying the public press...with items that may come

up of possible interest...the Department desires to be furnished with brief statements of such items...as can properly be made public."<sup>33</sup>

Wilson, Daniels, and the Navy

The succession of Woodrow Wilson to the presidency installed Josephus Daniels as Secretary of the Navy. Former publisher of the Raleigh News and Observer, Daniels had been, as well, Chairman of the Publicity Bureau of the National Committee and had served actively in Wilson's campaign. The importance of news was familiar to the new Secretary even if the Navy wasn't.<sup>34</sup>

On March 6, 1913, the day after he took office, Daniels sent a memorandum to the Bureaus and Offices of the Navy Department requiring that all articles intended for the press be submitted to him.<sup>35</sup> The order was repeated in April<sup>36</sup> and reemphasized in September:

The Secretary of the Navy directs that all articles for the press be submitted to him before they are given out. It is directed that all memoranda for the press prepared in the various bureaus or offices be sent to the Secretary of the Navy through his private secretary.

It is further directed that initials or identifying marks be placed at the top of press notices so as to indicate the Bureau or office preparing same.

While the utmost publicity consistent with existing regulations and the National Defense is desired; it has become necessary, in view of certain recent unauthorized

publications,<sup>37</sup> to insist upon a strict and careful compliance with the broad general requirement that all articles or information intended for publication or the press be revised in the Secretary's office.

Chiefs of Bureaus and heads of offices and divisions will take such steps as may be necessary to fully acquaint the personnel... with the requirements of this order.<sup>38</sup>

The last two paragraphs were additions to the first two memoranda, and an unequivocal announcement that Secretary Daniels intended to handle the public relations of the Navy Department himself, through the person of his private secretary, Howard A. Banks.

Banks, a former North Carolina journalist, is known to have handled many public relations functions for the Secretary, not the least of which was coordination of Navy participation in the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco, 1914-1916<sup>39</sup>

#### Naval Aspects of Wilsonian Policy

Following Wilson's election, navalphiles and others interested in military preparedness had expected the President to follow in Taft's footsteps in advocating an active building program for the Navy. The expectations were based both on the Democratic party's platform and upon Wilson's published philosophy concerning the utility of strong naval power in the protection of neutral rights.<sup>40</sup>

In his 1913 message to Congress, however, the

President made no mention of naval policy, but simply endorsed the annual reports of the executive departments.<sup>41</sup> For his part, Secretary Daniels made no significant departure from the proposals of the previous administration but did scale down the recommendations of the General Board for four battleships and a large number of smaller warships and auxiliaries to two battleships, eight destroyers and three submarines.<sup>42</sup>

The action was more surprising for its apparent lack of perception of growing world-wide armaments and their implications for U.S. foreign and naval policy.<sup>43</sup> While the Anglo-German naval equipoise and limitations of physical distance promised territorial security for the Western Hemisphere, the machinations of the Great Powers in the Far East portended a clash with American interests there. For the Navy, the implications pointed to the necessity of increased fleet strength and readiness.<sup>44</sup>

Daniels, meanwhile, turned his major attention to the limitation of armaments, to the expansion of the domestic shore establishment and to welfare measures for naval personnel.<sup>45</sup> Nowhere did he address the strategic implications confronting the Navy, which was all the more surprising for in that year, the General Board was allowed to place its recommendations



upon the public record.<sup>46</sup> For the first time this naval planning and advisory group was allowed to include an appendix to the Secretary's report and permitted to have a representative testify before the naval committees of Congress.<sup>47</sup>

The memorandum of the Board focused upon the lack of orderly development of the Navy and the need for a long-term policy, "...founded on our national needs and aims." To this end, the Board favored "giving the widest publicity" to its own views on policy, "taking the people and the Congress into...full confidence...inviting intelligent criticism as well as support."<sup>48</sup> In its first such statement, the Navy's planning body had enunciated a fundamental public relations policy admirably.

The naval appropriations bill, after spirited debate in both House and Senate, was signed into law essentially as the administration had recommended it -- just two days after the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Ferdinand on June 28, 1914. Contributing to its passage had been the newly found voice of the professional Navy speaking with recognition of the effects of public opinion upon national and naval policy. Captain Alfred T. Mahan had voiced the principle several years before, "...public opinion,

in operation, constitutes national policy..."<sup>49</sup>

Perhaps Secretary Daniels had played a role in the Board's expressed philosophy, although there is no evidence which might confirm such influence. On March 10, 1913, an entry in his diary reads, "Conferred with Naval (General) Board about the necessity of publicity --about the ways to secure accurate news to the people about the doings in the Navy. Too little is published and I planned to see that the public is acquainted with all that happens of interest."<sup>50</sup>

#### With Europe at War

War in Europe brought to America an anxiety as well as a sense of urgency. The traditional feelings of security which had marked American attitudes in the pre-war period crumbled before the spectre of unpreparedness. The drives of the preparedness groups, beginning in late 1914, gathered momentum during 1915 -- due largely to public interest in the subject.

The interests of the administration, however, were at considerable variance. The recommendations of the General Board for the building program in 1914 exceeded only slightly those of the previous year.<sup>51</sup> Still, Daniels pared them down drastically to conform to the economies of the administration.<sup>52</sup> In the Board's considerations of the deficiencies in enlisted personnel strength, the Secretary refused to publish

the report until all specific references to the shortages were stricken from it.<sup>53</sup>

While a Literary Digest poll of newspaper editors revealed considerable support for increasing the armed forces,<sup>54</sup> it was weighted in favor of the seaboard states whose natural interest ran in that direction. Inland opinion, according to a contemporary poll conducted by the Columbus (Ohio) Citizen, showed popular sentiment on the side of the administration.<sup>55</sup>

#### The Great Preparedness Movement

In the winter of 1914-15 the movement for preparedness sponsored by private societies acting in all conceivable avenues began a great educational drive to bring Americans to the realization of the inadequacy of the nation's arms. Organizations such as the National Security League, the Army League, the Navy League, and the National Defense League began campaigns to agitate for greater preparedness on the part of the United States.<sup>56</sup>

For their parts, both the Army and the Navy contributed to the preparedness drive.<sup>57</sup> "...The Administration, reversing its earlier policy, came forward with a great armament program of its own and a supporting propaganda that equalled that of any pressure group in the field."<sup>58</sup>

Of the press activities of the Secretary of the Navy, little is written. Daniels did begin to hold twice-daily press conferences in his office for Washington newsmen. The beginning date of this procedure is uncertain. In addition, items of interest to newsmen during the period 1914-1917 were posted in the Navy Department. Normally, these notices were of a routine information nature and were titled, "Press Notices," or "Memorandum for the Press."<sup>59</sup> Many of the news releases<sup>60</sup> began, "Secretary Daniels has announced..." or, "The Secretary of the Navy has authorized the announcement of...", leaving little doubt as to the authority for the release of information in the Navy.

Several of the news releases provided verbatim transcripts of Daniels' speeches. But most noteworthy was the tempo and extent of the press release activity which picked up significantly in mid-1915 and continued to do so through to the end of the war.<sup>61</sup> This accent coincided roughly with the administration's decision to accelerate the strengthening of the nation's military forces.<sup>62</sup>

A statement made by Daniels during the Congressional Investigations of 1917 concerning the Navy's lack of readiness for war is revealing of the Navy Secretary's philosophy of the function of information

in government. Questioned whether the proceedings of the Committee should be made public, Daniels replied,

Yes, it conveys facts that I think people would like to know and facts that they properly should know. My feeling in this war is that it is our high duty to give out to public information concerning everything we are doing, omitting only what expert military opinion says should not be made public...That is a duty that we owe to the public and there are good reasons why we must give that information out. The public should know everything possible.<sup>63</sup>

The application of this philosophy remained to be questioned.

In the years just prior to U.S. entry into the great war, both the activities of preparedness groups and international developments dramatized by events of the war combined with public opinion to secure legislation supporting a record-breaking military establishment.<sup>64</sup> For the Navy, the appropriations act of 1916 served as a milestone in the development of a modern seagoing force worthy of the name. While the building program received the major share of publicity, there were other significant provisions: the enlargement of the office of the Chief of Naval Operations, authorization and funding for the creation of a naval flying corps, major increases in both officer and enlisted strengths, and the establishment of an elaborate reserve organization.<sup>65</sup> Within that

naval act was seen also an endorsement for the principle of disarmament -- a factor which would find larger significance after the war. Perhaps, most important, however, was the long-sought merging of foreign and military policy into an indefinable thing which could be called National Policy.<sup>66</sup>

#### Daniels Versus the Navy League

In August, 1917, a traditional tie was severed when Secretary Daniels issued the order,

Directions are hereby given that after this date no officer, agent or representative of the Navy League is to be admitted to any ship, naval station or any naval reservation unless specifically directed by the Secretary of the Navy. Officers and men are enjoined to receive nothing whatsoever from the Navy League.<sup>67</sup>

Daniels had long chafed under League criticism, but an accusation made by the League implying complicity with certain labor elements during an investigation of a navy yard explosion in Mare Island was enough to disrupt relations between the two totally.<sup>68</sup>

At stake was the vitality of the League itself. Though overtures were made by Robert M. Thompson, President of the League, the dissociation continued to the end of Daniels term.

#### The Last Days, Then War

Appropriations do not establish fighting fleets -- they just provide for them. The building of the

ships and the training of their crews take years. The Naval Act of 1916 gave recognition to the problem by establishing a five-year program for systematic development and training of naval personnel.<sup>69</sup>

In the critical field of personnel, the shortage which Secretary Daniels had denied existed in 1914 was partly compensated for in 1917 by an emergency personnel measure authorizing an increase of 6,500 men.<sup>70</sup>

Within hours after the President's signature, Daniels sent telegrams to more than a thousand newspapers in the United States asking them to print front-page notices of the Navy's need. According to Daniels, most of them wrote editorials as well.<sup>71</sup>

#### Appointment of Belknap

The accelerated pace of events involving the Navy in early 1917 worked a burden upon the information function. In February, the Army and Navy Journal noted,

The Secretary of the Navy has turned over to Lieutenant Charles Belknap, Jr., of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, the work of reviewing Navy Department advises and making public those which do not fall under the ban of military secrecy. The Secretary will continue his daily conferences with the press representatives. Lieutenant Belknap will aid the press, however, in obtaining quick action on questions that arise.<sup>72</sup>

From scattered entries in his diary, Daniels reveals that Belknap worked directly with the Secretary.<sup>73</sup>

In deed, if not in name, the Navy had appointed its first public affairs officer.

Jenkins and the Navy News Bureau

On April 17, 1917, eleven days after the United States had declared war, the Secretary of the Navy asked John Wilbur Jenkins<sup>74</sup> to come to Washington to take over the duties of Civilian Director of Information.<sup>75</sup> Jenkins took over his new duties just three days later.<sup>76</sup>

Within a few more days, the same arrangement was made with Marvin Hunter McIntyre, City Editor of the Washington Herald to become Jenkins' assistant.<sup>77</sup> Both Jenkins and McIntyre, though paid by and carried on the books of George Creel's Committee on Public Information, worked for the Navy and established the Navy News Bureau.<sup>78</sup> The Bureau was staffed by several newspapermen called to active duty.

Throughout the war Jenkins provided the principal liaison with the War and State Departments as well as with the Committee on Public Information. He kept the new organization small, believing that a large staff would serve only to inhibit the speedy relay and release of news.<sup>79</sup>

In the news releases there was little pattern in the subject matter to indicate what kinds of information released by the Navy were of interest to the



Committee.<sup>80</sup> In nearly all cases, the Committee left news and security judgments to the War and Navy Departments, providing only policy guidance. If there were problems in authority, they seem to have been solved between Daniels and Creel by private discussion.<sup>81</sup> As for President Wilson, his criticisms or suggestions concerning the release of Navy information were made directly to Daniels without reference to Creel or his Committee.<sup>82</sup>

The work of the Navy News Bureau during the war concentrated on news of the convoys and the anti-submarine operations -- the major naval activity. The Bureau also prepared and distributed transcripts of the Secretary's daily press conferences. In the main, the more important items were announced by Daniels in his twice-daily sessions.<sup>83</sup> With feature materials, stories were released in advance of publication time to allow the newspapers ample opportunity to set them in type. One series of features, prepared by Jenkins, contained biographical sketches of prominent naval officers and Navy Department bureau Chiefs.<sup>84</sup>

Coordination of the work of the News Bureau within the professional naval circles of the Navy Department was accomplished by Lieutenant Commander (formerly Lieutenant) Charles Belknap, Jr., working in the office of the Chief of Naval Operations.<sup>85</sup> Major

determinations concerning the release of information were subjects of discussion between the Secretary and Admiral William S. Benson, the Chief of Naval Operations,<sup>86</sup> although Belknap was often a party to the discussion. It was Daniels who made the ultimate decision.

#### At War's End

The termination of hostilities left the Navy News Bureau with a big job yet to be done -- the news of returning our forces from overseas. The organization had proved equal to the task of wartime demands. Few would criticize the work it had done.<sup>87</sup> Though the Creel Committee was disbanded without the recognition it had earned, the public affairs function in the Navy went on to build a yet more effective place in the military service.

<sup>1</sup>Messages and Papers of the Presidents (Washington D.C., Burlington National Literature)XV:7667. Hereafter cited as M&P, and Harold and Margaret Sprout, The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776-1918, (5th Ed.)(Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966), 286-7, hereafter cited as Sprout, Rise.

<sup>2</sup>M&P, XV:7371-2 and Sprout, Rise, 288.

<sup>3</sup>E. B. Potter and Chester W. Nimitz, eds., Sea Power, a Naval History (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), 383. Hereafter cited as Potter and Nimitz, Sea Power.

<sup>4</sup>Sprout, Rise, 291 and Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Navy to the President of the United States, (various years), (1910,11), passim. Hereafter cited as Annual Reports of Secretary.

<sup>5</sup>Annual Reports of Secretary, (1911), 28-31 and Sprout, Rise, 291-2.

<sup>6</sup>Sprout, Rise, 292

<sup>7</sup>Armin Rappaport, The Navy League of the United States (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1962), 20. Hereafter cited as Rappaport, Navy League.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 25.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 26.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 27-8.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 29-30.

<sup>17</sup>In New York, for instance, support for the program was voiced by the Sun, American, Evening Journal, Times, and Herald. Only the small Navy World opposed.

<sup>18</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 30 and Sprout, Rise, 292

<sup>19</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 31-2 and Sprout, Rise, 294.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., Chapter 2

<sup>21</sup>Sprout, Rise, 294.

<sup>22</sup>For a discussion of the Navy and the spoilsmen, see, Sprout, Rise, passim. Increases in the domestic shore establishment to the detriment of developing overseas bases necessary to the Navy's new responsibilities in the Pacific and the Caribbean is obvious in this period, see, Ibid., 295-303.

<sup>23</sup>London Engineering, November 17, 1911.

<sup>24</sup>Correspondence concerning the article, subsequent investigation, and issuance of the General Order is contained in National Archives, Navy Department file, Office of the Secretary of the Navy RG 80, 27219-39 and 28019. Records in this group hereafter cited as Archives, Record Group (RG) 80.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 28019-18.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 28019-24.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., Secretary of Navy to Gardner dated February 1, 1912, file 28019.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 27416.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>It is noteworthy however that Daniels, as Editor of the News and Observer had demonstrated an interest in the Navy and had endorsed the naval programs of the Taft administration.

<sup>35</sup>Secretary of Navy memorandum 20400-46 of March 6, 1913. Contained in Records of the Office of information, Navy Department, Philibert Papers, op. cit.

<sup>36</sup>Secretary of Navy memorandum 20400-48 of April 17, 1913. Contained in Records of the Office of Information, Navy Department, Philibert Papers, op. cit

<sup>37</sup>Information leaks in the Navy Department were of concern to Daniels. One such, concerning deliberations of the Joint Board running counter to administration policies; is outlined in E. David Cronon, ed., The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, 1913-1921 (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1963), 66-68. Hereafter cited as Cronon, Diaries.

<sup>38</sup>Secretary of Navy memorandum 20400 of September 5, 1913. Contained in Records of the Office of information, Navy Department, Philibert Papers, op. cit..

<sup>39</sup>Banks' role in the public relations field remains unclear. It is not likely that Daniels provided the direction and that Banks did the leg work until 1917, when a more formal organization was established. For Banks connection with the Pan-Pacific Exposition see National Archives, Records of the Navy Department, Records relating to the Panama-Pacific Exposition, San Francisco, 1914-16, and Cronon, Diaries, 93.

<sup>40</sup>See, Wilson, History of the American People, War of 1812, quoted in Sprout, Rise.

<sup>41</sup>M&P, XVI:7906.

<sup>42</sup>Sprout, Rise, 308-9 and Annual Reports of Secretary, (1913), 9-11.

<sup>43</sup>For a discussion of these implications see, Sprout, Rise, 305-7, 310-12 and Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People (4th ed.) (New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1950), 610. Hereafter cited as Bailey, Diplomatic History.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Annual Reports of Secretary, (1913), 5-9, 11-16, 19-23, and Sprout, Rise, 309-10.

<sup>46</sup>Annual Reports of Secretary, (1913), 30-4 and Sprout, Rise, 309-10.

<sup>47</sup>Sprout, Rise, 310.

<sup>48</sup>Sprout, Rise, 310-11 and Chapter VI, conclusions.

<sup>49</sup>A. T. Mahan, Lessons of the War with Spain and Other Articles (Boston, Little Brown & Co., 1908), 10-11. A discussion of the importance of an informed citizenry upon national and naval strategies is contained in pp. 3-21.

<sup>50</sup>Cronon, Diaries, 6. The entry is just five days after Daniels took office. The Diaries, which lack the years 1914 and 1916 are laced with references to press queries, meetings, dinners, etc., but are not indexed in this area. It is obvious, however, that the press regarded Daniels as the official spokesman for the Navy.

<sup>51</sup>Annual Reports of Secretary (1914), 67.

<sup>52</sup>Sprout, Rise, 319.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Literary Digest, January 23, 1915, pp. 137-8, 162-9.

<sup>55</sup>Sprout, Rise, 321.

<sup>56</sup>For a detailed analysis of the part of the Navy League in the preparedness drive and the actions of the opponents to the League see, Rappaport, Navy League, 45-62. The effect of the movement on naval policy and appropriations is outlined in Sprout, Rise, 322-29. Reaction to the movement, from an administration man's point of view is contained in George Creel, Wilson and the Issues (New York, The Century Co., 1916), Chapter 5, 57-71.

<sup>57</sup>Sprout, Rise, 323-4

<sup>58</sup>Quoted from Sprout, Rise, 323. Contrast, for instance, Secretary Daniels' statements regarding fleet readiness in 1914 against those in 1915. Annual Reports of Secretary, (1914-15).

<sup>59</sup>A file of press releases (1914-1919) is contained in Archives, RG 80, Entry 113 (5 boxes).

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid. The themes of these releases, especially those providing verbatim transcripts of Daniels' speeches, progressively dealt with naval readiness.

<sup>62</sup>Sprout, Rise, 332-4, and R. S. Baker, Woodrow Wilson, VI:8-9

<sup>63</sup>See subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs for Investigation of the Conduct and administration of Naval Affairs, December 19, 1917, House Document 26064-17, p. 13.

<sup>64</sup>Potter and Nimitz, Sea Power, 464-5.

<sup>65</sup>Sprout, Rise, 344-46 and Potter and Nimitz Sea Power, 464-5.

<sup>66</sup>Sprout, Rise, 346.

<sup>67</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 70; Cronon, Diaries, 191-2, 199 and Daniels, Wilson Era (1910-17), 340-42. Daniels account in the latter sets the date in 1915, which is incorrect.

<sup>68</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 70-77. The League, beginning with Daniels' first annual report in 1913, had criticized the Secretary in progressing degrees for his lack of positive action toward building up the Navy. See Rappaport, Navy League, 40

<sup>69</sup>The measure as adopted, collapsed the time to three years.

<sup>70</sup>Authorized by President Wilson, March 24, 1917.

<sup>71</sup>Daniels, Our Navy at War, 33-4.

<sup>72</sup>Army and Navy Journal, February 10, 1917, Vol. 54 p. 761:3

<sup>73</sup>And later, with John Wilbur Jenkins, Head of the Navy News Bureau. See, for instance, Cronin, Diaries, September 11, 1917, p. 204.

<sup>74</sup>Jenkins whose middle name is spelled variously Wilber and Wilbur, formerly was a correspondent on Daniels' News and Observer. At the time of his appointment, he was regarded as the Dean of the Baltimore Press Corps. See George Creel, How We Advertised America (New York, Harper and Brothers, 1920), 81.

<sup>75</sup>Henry H. Douglas, "Public Relations, United States Navy." U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, 67:10 ff. Jenkins has been described variously as, "literary

assistant," and "head of the Navy Public Relations Department." News releases of the period gave his title as "Manager, Navy News Bureau."

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid. McIntyre was later presidential press assistant for F. D. Roosevelt whom he had met as assistant Secretary of the Navy during his Navy association.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> National Archives, Records of the Navy Department, RG 80, Entry 113 contains release files 1914-1920. While the records are incomplete, news releases made during the war contain almost daily news releases. Some releases during this period bear the headline of the committee on Public Information, others the Navy News Bureau and still others from the Bureau of Navigation, Navy Department. These latter were confined almost exclusively to announcements regarding naval personnel. Important news of naval action during the war seems to have been handled by Daniels in his press conferences with back-up releases by the Committee on Public Information (in most instances) or the Navy News Bureau.

<sup>81</sup> Daniels' diaries contain multiple references to private discussions with Creel regarding subjects for public release.

<sup>82</sup> See, Cronon, Diaries, passim. Specifically the committee was composed of Creel, as Chairman, and the Secretaries of State, War and the Navy. In this study, however, reference is made to the Committee in its performance as a functioning body for the dissemination of information.

<sup>83</sup> Archives, RG 80, Entry 113 (April 1917 - November 1918).

<sup>84</sup> See, for instance, the biography on Admiral W. S. Sims from this series as it appeared in the New York Sun, June 8, 1917, P. 5. Filed Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> See, Cronon, Diaries, passim.



<sup>86</sup> Cronon, Diaries, passim.

<sup>87</sup> One criticism purporting suppression of news was laid upon the Navy and the Creel Committee over conflicting reports of submarine attacks against a U.S. convoy on July 4, 1917. Later evaluations tend to place the blame on the Associated Press. See, for instance, Walton E. Bean, "The Accuracy of Creel Committee News," Journalism Quarterly, 18:263-73

## CHAPTER IV

### At War's End: The Reorganization

## Chapter IV

War's end had produced a strange conflict of political ideologies and practical realities. President Wilson's objective in entering the war was to produce an enduring peace. Against this purpose were the hard facts of Japanese occupation of, and subsequent pre-eminence in the German holdings in the Western Pacific and Great Britain's sea dominance in Europe by virtue of the destruction of the German High Seas Fleet. To complicate the problem, political and military planners were confronted by rising expectations on the part of the American public for a lasting peace without armaments.<sup>1</sup>

Of lasting implication, too, was the astounding development in military and industrial technologies -- for the Navy, the portents of submarine and aerial warfare upon the current naval strategy.<sup>2</sup>

Noting the dramatic rise of both Great Britain and Japan as naval powers, and potentially naval rivals of the United States, naval planners in 1918 and 1919 advocated a return to battleship construction which had been held in abeyance during the war in favor of increased destroyer production to cope with the German submarine menace.<sup>3</sup> Continuation of the 1916 naval bill's construction rate would, by 1925, make the American Navy the equal of any in the world.<sup>4</sup>

In December, 1918, the proposals of the naval General Board received President Wilson's endorsement in his annual message to Congress. Secretary Daniels, as well, included support for the increased construction program in his annual report.<sup>5</sup> This advocacy, however, was seen in different perspective from that of the naval planners. The administration intended to use these proposals as an unsubtle influence for the European allies to conform to Wilsonian desires for the stabilization of world order and the reduction of armaments.<sup>6</sup> Six months later, Daniels appeared before the House Naval Affairs Committee to recommend abandonment of his previous proposal for a huge three-year building program, predicating the reversal on a renewed faith in the League of Nations.

The operations of the Navy News Bureau, meanwhile, had continued uninterrupted. In December, 1918, a fleet review in New York provided the Navy a fine opportunity to demonstrate its publicity operation.<sup>8</sup> Detailed advance planning; provisions for press, dignitary, and general ship visits; speeches and special events -- all were included in the pageantry. Advance features on the ships and their commanding officers, with the Bureau's imprimatur were issued to insure press interest in the event.<sup>9</sup> For John Wilbur Jenkins, it marked one

of his final projects with the Bureau. He was succeeded in April, 1919, by his assistant, Marvin McIntyre.<sup>10</sup> With the dissolution of the Committee on Public Information in June, 1919, McIntyre became formally an employee of the Navy Department.<sup>11</sup>

#### The Popular Revolt Against Navalism

Set against the accelerated building proposals of the Navy was the post-war tide of public opinion. Not only was the temper of American people to be measured in the nation's press,<sup>12</sup> but, perhaps more accurately, on the floor of the House in bitter debate over appropriations,<sup>13</sup> and in other indicators such as the rapid and drastic decline of interest in the Navy League.<sup>14</sup>

From its high-water mark of preparedness and war-time prosperity, the tide ebbed to low water--to post-war depression and abiding concern for the cost of armaments to keep the United States, unnecessarily in the view of many, on a par with Great Britain. When next the tide flowed, in 1920-21, it flowed with the strength of the peace movement, carrying upon its crest a popular fervor which washed across the nation, floating a platform which ended in the international limitation of arms conferences in Washington. Influential newspapers, peace societies, churches of all denominations,

women's groups, labor groups -- all had a voice in affixing their support for an international detente.<sup>15</sup> They had fought a war to end all wars!

#### The Internecine Naval War

In December, 1919, the Secretary of the Navy published a list of medal awards for wartime service as a part of his annual report.<sup>16</sup> On December 15, the Washington Post published a page one story bylined by Albert W. Fox suggesting that Congress investigate the discrepancy between the actual awards and those recommended by the Naval Awards Board.<sup>17</sup> On December 17, Admiral William S. Sims, the war's foremost naval commander and, then, President of the Naval War College, declined his medal. Sims' declination, for alleged injustices in the awards, precipitated a rash of similar refusals from deserving officers and, with it, a storm of controversy. The aftermath was a Congressional investigation.

The underground river which had been running at cross purposes to the Secretary came boiling to the surface. The question of just awards served to raise further and more fundamental inquiries into the administration of the Navy Department, questions which had been raised but not satisfactorily answered in the 1917 probes.<sup>18</sup> Included were the Navy's inability to

exercise military command through an effective Chief of Naval Operations, failure of the Department to make adequate preparations for war, preoccupation of the Secretary with trivia and politics to the disregard of strategic considerations, and, as well, the propaganda campaign of Daniels, his News Bureau and his technical Bureau Chiefs to convince the general public that the Navy had been prepared for war in all respects.<sup>19</sup>

The internal strife in the Navy Department was paraded before the Senate Naval Affairs sub-committee, whose Chairman, Senator Eugene Hale of Maine, took great care in cross examination to raise fully the points of relevance to future organization and operation of the Department.<sup>20</sup> Many of the Admirals who headed Bureaus in the Navy Department during the war, whose opening statements to the Committee were subject to Daniels' scrutiny, modified their positions during Hale's cross examination.<sup>21</sup>

As to the information aspects of Daniels' administration Kittredge felt compelled to write:

...(when the war came)...automatically the curtain was dropped, so far as the public was concerned, over the activities of the Navy Department. One of Mr. Daniels' first acts, on assuming office in 1913, had been to issue orders in the Navy Department that henceforth all public statements would be issued by his office. After war began, this order was more

rigidly enforced than ever before. The country knew only what Mr. Daniels wanted it to know of what was going on, --and surely Mr. Daniels was painting a picture roseate enough for even the most belligerent citizen. Day after day a flood of notices poured out from the Navy Department of all the things that the Navy had done, was doing and was going to do. From the day that we declared war one would have imagined, from Mr. Daniels' official statements, that the whole of the Navy at once, ipso facto, was transformed to a war basis...<sup>22</sup>

The vacillation of Secretary Daniels which had for so long festered in the breasts of many professional officers was recalled. The propaganda cover for the Navy's inadequate preparations had been an additional source of frustration for naval officers.<sup>23</sup>

The hearings themselves, according to Kittredge, were slanted in their press coverage by a Secretary who knew how to take advantage of the press operation.<sup>24</sup> In Sims' opening statement he noted Daniels' advantage, "In view of the public presentation of this case, which has resulted from no intent on my part, I am perhaps handicapped by lack of any connection with the press or experience in manipulating that important instrument of public opinion."<sup>25</sup> That lesson was not to be lost on the professional Navy which had heretofore shown ultraconservatism in public affairs.

Though rancor, dissension and recrimination characterized the hearings, a larger principle had been enunciated by Sims in his final conclusion of



lessons learned in the war,

The country must take a more active interest in the welfare of its first line of defense. It must insist on having full and correct reports of the condition of the Navy. It must demand and exact a full responsibility from the officials entrusted with the direction and administration of the Navy. Naval officers should be permitted a greater liberty of expression in order that the repetition of such a demoralizing tyranny as that of Mr. Daniels may be prevented.<sup>26</sup>

The pronouncement made a good case for an open public affairs function in the Navy.

Daniels, in a term longer than any Secretary before him, had made many reforms in the service. Not all were popular, nor were all necessarily good. He had instituted a formal organization for the dissemination of news; however, the control he exercised over that operation was not above criticism. Within his tenure, the United States Navy had grown to a second rank among the world's naval powers -- though many events propelled the development in spite of the Secretary rather than because of him. Nonetheless, the information bureau created by Daniels was to continue on unbroken to the present day, largely through the efforts of subsequent civilian and naval leaders who saw, in the function, a basic responsibility to the general public.

Harding and Disarmament<sup>27</sup>

President Harding entered the White House on March 4, 1921, with public commitments to undertake steps toward international agreements in limitations of armaments. In early April, his special message to Congress reflected this philosophy in a call for a reduction in defense expenditures.<sup>28</sup> On April 20, however, the administration disclosed its opposition to curtailment of the building program authorized in 1916. The apparent procrastination caused an immediate reaction in the disarmament movement, the proponents of which resumed their publicity campaigns.<sup>29</sup>

Noting the disparity between preparedness and disarmament news coverage, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. recommended to Navy Secretary Edwin Denby in March that the Navy undertake a program to select and send newspaper correspondents to a special course at the Naval War College.<sup>30</sup> The purpose of the proposal was to increase the newsmen's understanding of the Navy. The recommendation was forwarded to the General Board by Denby for further consideration. In April, the Board recommended<sup>31</sup> that the War College institute such a program noting additionally,

...The war and movies and the Recruiting Service with its publicity bureau have done much to bring the Navy prominently before the people. But the Navy Department needs the active and continuous aid of the American press through the agencies of the Sunday paper and the illustrated popular weeklies to furnish serious information as to broad policies in an interesting manner to combat the efforts being made to reduce and even dispense with the Navy. Popular articles by naval officers on live topics would also be of value.

Though the problem was addressed from the lack of a broad base of information, no mention was made of the then functioning Navy News Bureau which continued its operation until September, 1921, when it became the Navy Press Room. A lack of funds had forced abandonment of the War College plan.<sup>32</sup> It was also a funding problem which had forced a curtailment of the News Bureau's operation and staff.<sup>33</sup>

In September, the name Navy News Bureau was changed to Navy Press Room,<sup>34</sup> and a Naval Reserve Lieutenant Commander, Wells Hawks, became the Information Officer of the Navy.<sup>35</sup> He was also the information staff.

#### The Washington Naval Conference

On November 12, 1921, the naval limitation of arms conference convened in Washington. In a dramatic and calculated announcement Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes proposed not only the disarmament plans for the United States, but offered commensurate

measures for the other naval powers as well.<sup>36</sup> In a stroke, the leadership for the disarmament movement had been placed in the hands of the administration.<sup>37</sup> Popular enthusiasm and support for the American proposal swept the United States.<sup>38</sup>

The chief architect for the proposal in this fashion had been Hughes. He was ably assisted on the technical details by just three men in the Navy Department--Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt, the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Robert E. Coontz, and his assistant, Captain William V. Pratt.<sup>39</sup>

Coming as it did as a complete surprise, information regarding the proposal of the United States was at a premium. The details, together with their ramifications for other navies, were supplied mainly by Secretary of the Navy Denby in his daily press conferences.<sup>40</sup> It was no mean task. Several hundred journalists representing both the U.S. and foreign press were on hand for the conferences.<sup>41</sup> This method for the release of information directly from the primary source was continued throughout the conference.

#### The Fight for Naval Aviation

During this same period, with public sentiment running high in support of limitations of armaments, the Director of the War Plans Division within the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations addressed a

memorandum in January, 1922, to the Chief of Naval Operations recommending the establishment of a Press Relations office.<sup>42</sup> The purpose of the office, as envisioned, would be fourfold:

To furnish correct information; to actively and definitely contradict incorrect public statements; to familiarize the people of the United States with the work and needs of the naval service, (and) to promote interest in the Navy.

The rationale supporting the recommendation continued, "...it is but necessary to refer to the recent bombing tests to show the power of propaganda and the weakness of the lack of propaganda."

The Office of Naval Intelligence concurred in the recommendation, which proposed location of the press relations office within Naval Intelligence, and added, "...information that is inconsistent or antagonistic to the policy or views of the Department would...be more harmful than no publicity at all... the closest liaison would be necessary between the publicity office and the head of the Navy Department."<sup>43</sup> The recommendation smacked of policy control for other than military security. However, the endorsement for an office of press relations included the suggestion for ordering an officer

...of special talent, rank and experience to Operations to act as publicity officer... where he would maintain close contact with the Secretary of the Navy, Chief of Naval Operations, Office of Naval Intelligence and the Bureaus and be responsible for all information and news releases.<sup>44</sup>

Considerations of aviation and its effects on naval strategy had been of concern in the Navy Department for several years. In its recommendations for construction in 1918, the General Board had requested an aircraft carrier, envisioning the advantages of airpower as an adjunct to fleet operations.<sup>45</sup> In 1919, provision was made for an air arm and permission granted by Congress on a proposal for conversion of a collier to a primitive aircraft carrier.<sup>46</sup> In 1920, the Board proposed to construct four large, high speed carriers in a three-year building program.<sup>47</sup>

While the propaganda activities of General William Mitchell captured the popular imagination<sup>48</sup> and headlines, advocates of air power within the Navy were less vocal in their criticisms of the conservative elements within their service which inhibited aviation's progress. The Navy was sensitive to Mitchell's activities. During the fall, 1919, hearings conducted by the House Military Affairs Committee on a separate air service, Secretary of the Navy Daniels sent a letter to the Committee

Chairman asking that the Navy Department be given ample opportunity to present its views. He included a copy of a letter he had sent to Secretary of War Baker refuting in laborious detail many of the statements made by Mitchell. The whole package was the subject of a six-page news release distributed by the Navy News Bureau.<sup>49</sup>

As noted above, a press relations office had been recommended, partially, it would seem, to fight the public battle over air power. Following the bombing tests made against target ships and the sinking of the "impregnable" Ostfriesland in the Spring and Summer of 1921, the press had heralded the doom of the battleship. The event forced upon naval planners a painful reevaluation of naval strategy, a process all too reluctantly undertaken by many senior officers.<sup>50</sup> Counter-propaganda was not the answer, although it made sense why the proposals for a press relations office contained, in a period of deep doctrinal controversy, provisions for policy guidance. It was also at this time that the Arms Conference, in December, recommended statutes imposing limitations on construction of aircraft carriers.

#### Information Under Intelligence

By February, 1922, the decision upon previous recommendations had been reached. The information function in the Navy was placed under Naval Intelligence.<sup>51</sup>

1. In order to supply general Navy information constantly requested from various societies and newspapers throughout the United States, an information section has been established under the Office of Naval Intelligence.
2. In order not to increase overhead expenses the work of this section will be delegated to the various Bureaus and Offices under the general supervision of the Director of Naval Intelligence. This delegation of special work for the present will be as follows:
  - (a) Daily press handled by the Aide to the Secretary and an officer of the Information Section.
  - (b) General Navy information to be collected and mailed as routine to such societies or papers requesting it. This work is to be handled by the Morale Division in Navigation.<sup>52</sup>
  - (c) Information on specific subjects as requested. This work to be handled by Morale Division in Navigation.
  - (d) Pictures. This work to be handled by the photographic section of the Bureau of Aeronautics.
3. The Director of Naval Intelligence in addition to supervising the work enumerated above will lend his assistance to individual writers on naval subjects and naval stories, in order that facts given may be correct.
4. All Bureaus are requested to lend full assistance in providing accurate naval information not considered as confidential.
5. No policies shall be enunciated by any of the agencies mentioned. The Secretary determines and announces policies.
6. No statements derogatory to, or critical of, other branches of government shall be issued.

/s/ Edwin Denby



In March, 1922, Denby directed the Bureaus and Offices of the Navy Department to detail an officer and necessary clerical assistance to assist the Information Section. "Officers so designated will meet at such times and places as the Secretary may direct."<sup>53</sup> On the first of May, a similar letter was sent to Fleet Commanders, District Commandants, and to Commanders of overseas stations directing them to appoint an officer to collect information and photographs from ships and stations under their respective commands and forward them weekly to the Office of Naval Intelligence.<sup>54</sup> For the first time, the information network had been spread throughout the military chain of command of the Navy.

The first head of the Information Section was Commander Ralph A. Koch, who assumed his duties in February.<sup>54A</sup> At Koch's suggestion, two lieutenants, John B. Heffernan and W. F. Dietrich, were appointed as assistants. The precepts of the Information Section's operations with the press were to provide complete and factual answers to press queries. There was little activity in the initiation of press releases, but those that were provided were distributed to all on a strictly equal basis. The major portion of the news came from Secretary Denby himself who was available to press representatives every afternoon, or in

the mornings by appointment. Liaison was maintained with the Secretary by Koch, who also maintained close contact with the publicity bureau in New York.<sup>55</sup>

### Repairing the Rift

By the fall of 1921 when the Limitation of Arms Conference was convening, the Navy League of the United States had become all but defunct.<sup>56</sup> Desperately, its leadership held on to see what results the Conference would have upon the United States Navy. They were appalled at Conference's end in February, but determined then more than ever to find an active role in building up the Navy.<sup>57</sup>

To maintain the sea forces at full treaty strength became the League's objective. Powerful peace groups were on hand in Washington to urge further cuts in military appropriations.<sup>58</sup> When the General Board recommended personnel strength below the level necessary to man a treaty-strength fleet and Secretary Denby further pared the figure in an economy move, the issue was drawn -- the Navy League had a worthy cause.<sup>59</sup> A further cut by the Naval Affairs Committee brought an eventual compromise figure between that body and Denby which was far below fleet requirements. Though the League was highly reluctant to accept this figure as being in the best interests of the Navy, the

realization that Congress would probably approve none greater and reassurances from the Secretary that it represented a temporary expedient, the League closed ranks behind the Secretary -- aware that internal dissension at this critical period would dismember any effort at concerted action.<sup>60</sup>

The League embarked immediately upon an educational campaign reminiscent of its operations of old -- publicity and editorial suggestions to newspapers, letters to the full membership urging them to exert influence upon their Congressmen, literature to influentials and legislators. -- all aimed at securing passage of the bill over opposition moving for increased appropriation cuts. The manpower bill did pass, although an estimate of the League's influence cannot be made.<sup>61</sup> The small but loyal membership had returned to a program of action.

In August, 1922, according to Navy League historian Armin Rappaport, the president of the League sounded out the Navy Department on a proposal for the establishment of an annual day "on which the people of the country would be reminded, through the concerted efforts of numerous patriotic organizations, of the Navy and its value to them."<sup>62</sup> The project was approved by then Acting Secretary Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., and the cooperation of the Navy assured by a directive issued to all ships and stations.<sup>63</sup> The date of

October 27 was selected, being the birthday of Theodore Roosevelt and the reported anniversary date of the submission of the first naval bill, and preparations for the celebration got underway with the blessings of Denby and Roosevelt.<sup>64</sup> The enmity between the League and the Navy Department which had come in the Daniels administration was thus healed and both the Department and the League could look forward to further cooperation such as was demonstrated in the League's first official Navy Day in 1922.<sup>65</sup>

In fact, cooperation with the League in 1923 became firm.

The connection between League and Navy proceeded directly from the society's headquarters to the Navy Secretary's office. The connection...was constant and continuous. The League's secretary, president and individual directors solicited advice, accepted suggestions, submitted releases for approval prior to publication, and generally kept in close touch with the Department.<sup>66</sup>

#### Press Relations

In February, 1923, a year after incorporation of the information function within naval intelligence, Denby issued a directive throughout the naval service pointing out the principles of the Department's concern for continued active operations with the press:<sup>67</sup>

1. It is the right of the Congress and the

people of the United States to be fully informed concerning the ships, men and operation of the Navy.

2. The press of the country is the most important vehicle by which information can be disseminated. It is interested in placing before its readers through news columns and editorial comment, the condition of the Navy and the operation of its ships. It is, therefore, of importance to the country and to the Navy, that the press should be placed in possession of all facts in connection with the service except such as are military secrets.

3. It is directed that all commandants of Naval Districts, Navy yards and naval stations and Flag officers, recruiting officers, and officers on detached duty, take steps to establish and maintain cordial relationships with the press of their localities and to keep in mind the Department's policy and guide themselves accordingly.

4. The Director of Naval Intelligence has been instructed to cooperate with the various offices concerned and to furnish them with such information and suggestions as he may feel will further this object.

5. The Commander-in-Chief, Commanders of Forces and squadrons and commandants of naval districts will take appropriate steps to bring these instructions to the attention of all officers and men under their command.

/s/ EDWIN DENBY"

Despite the increased emphasis by the Secretary, another proposal by Assistant Secretary Roosevelt for a course of instruction for selected press representatives at the Naval War College met with failure again in 1923 through lack of funds.<sup>68</sup>

In the winter of 1923-24, Denby found a new method for acquainting members of the press with naval operations - embarkation with the fleet during maneuvers.<sup>69</sup> It was a program independent of funding restrictions. A press party of eighty-five editors and publishers embarked in fleet units during annual maneuvers in the Carribbean. Following the cruise, the newsmen wired their appreciation to the Secretary:

The memories of this delightful voyage from Charleston to Culebra are indelible. It marks a contact between our Navy and representatives of the press which we believe to be of marked mutual advantage. Every guest on this ship has already a clear conception of what our Navy is doing and what it stands for, and will be able to present our Navy's mission to the public in a more intelligent and broader way. We hope that this beneficent educational process will continue.<sup>70</sup>

The event was worthwhile for the Navy. It enabled the service to reach a receptive audience with a message<sup>71</sup> and to demonstrate its points as well. The program appears to have been continued until 1936 when the problem of security forced a limitation on guests to include only wire service representatives who were also officers in the Naval Reserve.<sup>72</sup> During this period, the program was enlarged to include prominent civilian guests as well as press representatives.<sup>73</sup> On the 1927 cruise, arrangements were made for the

first time for news of the fleet to be sent by wireless during battle maneuvers.<sup>74</sup> The officer who made the arrangements, Robert B. Carney, was later to become Chief of Naval Operations.

#### Organizational Development

On March, 1924, Secretary of the Navy Curtis D. Wilbur succeeded Denby.<sup>75</sup> The change in administration appeared to have little effect on the development of the information function throughout the naval service. A letter to all ships and stations in August, 1924, emphasized the importance of officers appointed to information duties being relieved by other officers when detached to insure continuity of the information input to the Information Section.<sup>76</sup> Secretary Wilbur at this time was conducting press conferences in the Navy Department twice daily, at 10 a.m. and at 4 p.m..<sup>77</sup> An additional reminder was sent also to the Bureaus of the Department to stimulate the information input available for the Secretary's use.<sup>78</sup>

Assistance promised to outlying commands in the Secretary's letter of February, 1923, urging increased efforts in press relations<sup>79</sup> came forth, first in 1924, in a seven-lesson study course on news handling issued by the Bureau of Navigation,<sup>80</sup> and, later, in a compendium issued by the Information Section,

Office of Naval Intelligence, in 1925, detailing the current status of United States and foreign navies in relation to each other and to authorized treaty strengths.<sup>81</sup>

In February, 1926, the Office of Naval Intelligence took preliminary steps toward organizing a special group of volunteer reserve intelligence officers. Intelligence officers in naval districts were requested to submit a list of qualified individuals, "preferably key people in the news and writing world, who in time of peace can be of value in keeping in touch with this office and, in time of national emergency, can be actively coordinated with the duties of Naval Intelligence in this particular section as part of war plans."<sup>82</sup> Thus was begun the selection of a nucleus force for later augmentation of the information function.<sup>83</sup> The organization chart for the Information Section of 1926 showed billets for one captain, as branch head, one commander, six lieutenant commanders and thirteen lieutenants.<sup>84</sup> Only three officers manned the section and did the work,<sup>85</sup> but there was obviously room to grow.

#### The Tide of Events

With the presidency of Calvin C. Coolidge, the attitude of the administration tended to center on



domestic prosperity and to withdraw from armament proposals to keep the United States Navy at full strength allowed under the agreements of the Washington Conference.<sup>86</sup> With Japan and Great Britain building ships in the unlimited classes of cruisers and auxiliaries, a move to reach agreement on further limitations became especially strong in the United States.<sup>87</sup> Consideration of another conference was a source of consternation to naval planners and navalphiles alike, for agreements in tonnage ratios were based on actual levels afloat, building or funded.<sup>88</sup> In this category, a fleet in being or in the making, the United States was especially weak. Yet, there was no indication that the administration would consider any but the most restrictive of building measures prior to entering another limitation agreement for fear of jeopardizing a spirit of international conciliation.

Measures proposed by the General Board to bring the battleship fleet to treaty levels and to increase cruiser tonnage to a parity with Great Britain failed to receive the support of the administration and of the Congress.<sup>90</sup> In February, 1927, when Coolidge proposed the Geneva Conference, the Navy was faced with the reality that it had not even been able to obtain appropriations to begin work on the last three

of eight cruisers authorized in the appropriations act of 1924.<sup>91</sup> The postwar mood of the American people simply did not support continued spending upon armaments when the possibility of international agreements might serve a better purpose.<sup>92</sup> The machinations of Japan in the Pacific did not seem to alter the mood, nor did the intransigence of Italy or France in proceeding upon their own courses and refusing to attend the conference.<sup>93</sup>

#### From Within the Navy

Noting the apathy of the general public for the subject of adequate armaments, a rash of articles appeared in the professional journals during the period 1924-1930 -- each proposing new or better ways to influence, educate or indoctrinate the general public on the needs of the service and its importance to the national defense.<sup>94</sup> At least some segment of professional opinion had taken cognizance of the problem. One writer commented:

...The Navy Department usually manages to hold up its end of (the government's) vast system of collecting and releasing news to the press, but in other sections of the country the Navy's publicity scheme is either non-existent or woefully inadequate.

There are feelings within the Navy that the country has deserted it...The country has not deserted the Navy; the Navy has not made itself an integral part of the country. It has not succeeded in making itself part and parcel of

the national life; it has not become real in the minds of millions of Americans.

...Such a failure can only be attributed to the lack of effective and sustained publicity, the lack of organization, facilities, and equipment for the gathering and dissemination of service news to the newspapers and public of the nation.<sup>95</sup>

In commenting on organization, the author paid tribute to the Army's information system and proposed that the Navy follow suit by establishing an effective nation-wide information network. That author was Hanson Baldwin, later to become military editor of the New York Times. His comments indicated that the information function in the Navy had a far piece yet to go.

<sup>1</sup> For a description of post-war conditions in the United States, especially as they affected naval policy see, Harold and Margaret Sprout, The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776-1918, Chapter 19, and Harold and Margaret Sprout, Toward a New Order of Sea Power (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1940), Chapters 4, 7, hereafter cited as Sprout, New Order. See also Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People, (4th ed.) (New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1950), Chapter 34, hereafter cited as Bailey, Diplomatic History; Tracy B. Kittredge, Naval Lessons of the Great War (New York, Doubleday, Page & Co., 1921), Chapter 23, hereafter cited as Kittredge, Naval Lessons.

<sup>2</sup> Sprout, New Order, 47-9

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 54-73.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>5</sup> Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Navy to the President of the United States, (various years), (1918). Hereafter cited as Annual Reports of Secretary.

<sup>6</sup> Sprout, New Order, 59-60.

<sup>7</sup> Armin Rappaport, The Navy League of the United States (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1962), 80. Hereafter cited as Rappaport, Navy League.

<sup>8</sup> See project folder, National Archives, files of the Office of the Secretary of the Navy, RG 80, Entry 113, box 1 of 5.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., and attendant press coverage in New York papers, December 26, 1918.

<sup>10</sup> List of naval officers and civilians who have served as Director of Public Relations, unserialized letter in records of the Office of Information, Navy Department Records, Office of Naval History. Filed in Philibert Papers. Hereafter cited as Navy Records, Naval History.

<sup>11</sup> Henry H. Douglas, "Public Relations, United States Navy," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, 72:1432 (1941). Hereafter cited as Douglas, Public Relations.

<sup>12</sup> For a survey of press opinion in early 1919 see, Literary Digest, 60: 11 ff.

<sup>13</sup> Sprout, New Order, 106-14. The House Naval Affairs Committee made drastic cuts in the proposal which was again cut on the floor and passed only after heated debate. An attempt to restore some of the funds was killed in the Senate by a filibuster.

<sup>14</sup> Rappaport, Navy League, 77-8.

<sup>15</sup> Sprout, New Order, 116.

<sup>16</sup> Annual Reports of Secretary, (1919).

<sup>17</sup> E. David Cronon, ed., The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, 1913-1921 (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1963), 470 ff. Hereafter cited as Cronon, Diaries.

<sup>18</sup> The most complete and interesting account of the investigation, although biased in favor of Sims, is T. B. Kittredge, Naval Lessons of the Great War. Kittredge, a naval correspondent for the Providence Journal, was a Naval Reserve Lieutenant on Sims' intelligence and historical staff in London. His book, which grew out of preparations for the Committee Hearings, is valuable for its operational viewpoint, having served on the active end of the war away from Washington officialdom.

<sup>19</sup> For a discussion of the import of these and related questions see, Julius Augustus Furer, RADM, USN (Ret.), Administration of the Navy Department in World War II, Chapters 1-3, passim; Charles D. Paullin, "Naval Administration 1775-1911," Naval Institute Proceedings, collection of articles 1906-14; Dudley W. Knox, Commodore, USN (Ret.) A History of the United States Navy (New York, Putnam's, 1948), passim; and L. Robert Davids, "There Was Not Always a CNO," Shipmate, September - October, 1967, pp. 7-11.

<sup>20</sup> Kittredge, Naval Lessons, passim.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 28-9 and passim. Navy Department press releases during this period are contained in Files of Secretary.

<sup>23</sup> B. A. Fiske, From Midshipman to Rear Admiral (New York, The Century Company, 1919) passim.

<sup>24</sup> Kittredge, Naval Lessons, Chapter 4 and passim, and Cronon, Diaries, 470 ff.

<sup>25</sup> Kittredge, Naval Lessons, 103.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 458. Franklin D. Roosevelt, then Assistant Secretary of Navy had substantiated some of Sims' criticisms of Daniels' administration in a speech in Brooklyn February 1, 1920. See Cronon, Diaries, 420 ff.

<sup>27</sup> The term disarmament represents somewhat of a misnomer in that proposals under consideration did not involve a stripping or complete scrapping of arms, but, rather, constituted plans for an international parity formula based on present arms levels and limitations upon future building programs.

<sup>28</sup> Sprout, New Order, 122. The internal and international factors influencing the decision to propose the Washington Limitation of Arms Conference are outlined admirably in Ibid., Chapter 8. A primary consideration was American public opinion.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 123 ff.

<sup>30</sup> Assistant Secretary of Navy memo to Secretary of Navy of March 28, 1921. National Archives, op. cit., RG 80, 3809--976.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., General Board letter No. 441 of April 18, 1921.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Douglas, Public Relations.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., and Secretary of Navy memorandum to all Navy Department Bureaus and Offices of September 12, 1921.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., and interview September 1, 1967 with Miss Helene Philibert, long associated with the information branch of the Office of Naval Intelligence and later with the Office of Public Relations. Hawks, it is reported, had been recalled to active duty during the war, had experience as a circus press agent, and had worked in the publicity bureau of Navy recruiting in New York.

<sup>36</sup> Sprout, New Order, 149-57. A concise summary of conference proposals and ultimate agreements is contained in E. B. Potter and Chester W. Nimitz, eds., Sea Power, A Naval History (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), 480-83. Hereafter cited as Potter and Nimitz, Sea Power.

<sup>37</sup> Sprout, New Order, Chapter 9.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 157-60.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 146 ff.

<sup>40</sup> See transcripts of the press conferences of the Secretary of the Navy, January - December, 1921, Philibert Papers, Box 154.

<sup>41</sup> Sprout, New Order, 149-50.

<sup>42</sup> Director, War Plans Division memorandum to the Chief of Naval Operations of January 12, 1922; National Archives, op. cit., 3809--976:6

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. Office of Naval Intelligence memorandum to the Chief of Naval Operations of January 14, 1922.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Sprout, New Order, 226. Provision for a naval air corps had been made in the 1916 appropriation bill.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., and Annual Reports of Secretary, (1919), pp. 57, 550.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., and Annual Reports of Secretary, (1920), 215-6.

<sup>48</sup> For an account of General Mitchell's fight to develop military aviation see, I. D. Levine, Mitchell, Pioneer of Air Power (New York, Duell, Sloan & Pearce, Inc., 1943)

<sup>49</sup> See, Navy News Bureau release, December 19, 1919. Filed in Philibert Papers, separate air service. According to Daniels' diary, he saw Secretary Baker on the subject on the same day, December 19.

<sup>50</sup> Sprout, New Order, p.v..

<sup>51</sup> Secretary of Navy directive to all Bureaus and Offices of the Navy Department, Subject: Navy Department Information Section under Office of Naval Intelligence, dated February 21, 1922, National Archives, op.cit, RG 80, 28642 -- 49. Paragraphs five and six of the letter press rough draft appear to have been added by Secretary of the Navy Denby, firmly placing policy decisions in his hands alone. Also contained in edited form in Philibert Papers.

<sup>52</sup>Also under the Morale Division were the publicity bureaus of Navy recruiting.

<sup>53</sup>Secretary of Navy letter to all Bureaus and Offices of March 1, 1922. Filed, National Archives, op. cit., 28642--49.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid. Secretary of Navy letter op 16 Ser 7734 dated May 1, 1922.

<sup>54A</sup>Ibid. Interview with Admiral (Ret.) John B. Heffernan conducted August 29, 1967. See also Navy Records Naval History, List of naval officers and civilians.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid. Although there was no formal link, the New York publicity office served as a convenient contact point through which information was funneled. It had been used in this manner for many years. See, for instance, Cronon, Diaries, passim.

<sup>56</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 77-82.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 83-90.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 85-6.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 91.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid..

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 91-2.

<sup>62</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 93. Admiral Heffernan recalls that the project was proposed by Koch, who suggested the idea to Assistant Secretary Roosevelt, Heffernan Interviews, op. cit.. Author J. Russell Carney maintains the idea for a national Navy Day originated with Mrs. William H. Hamilton, founder of the Manhattan Navy Club, who suggested its implementation to Roosevelt, Naval Institute Proceedings, 65:1441.

<sup>63</sup>Secretary of Navy letter to all ships and stations, dated September 12, 1922, National Archives, op. cit., RG 80, 3809, 1124.

<sup>64</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 93.

<sup>65</sup>For a description of the success of the event see Rappaport, Navy League, 93-4.



<sup>66</sup> Rappaport, Navy League, 97. According to Admiral Heffernan, this relationship did not involve the Information Section. Intercourse with the Navy League was handled entirely by the Secretary himself, Heffernan Interview, op. cit.

<sup>67</sup> Secretary of Navy letter to the naval service dated February 3, 1923, Philibert Papers, op. cit.

<sup>68</sup> Chief, Bureau of Navigation letter to Assistant Secretary of the Navy of May 7, 1923. National Archives, RG 80, 3809:976:23, op. cit.

<sup>69</sup> Although no records have been found of the planning for this event, details are available in a letter to a prospective guest in the following year. See Secretary of Navy letter to Karl A. Bickel, United Press of January 10, 1925, Philibert Papers, op cit.

<sup>70</sup> Quoted from Ibid..

<sup>71</sup> Frank Schofield, "The Aims and Present Status of the Navy," paper prepared...to be read to owners and editors of the press visiting the fleet at Culebra, February, 1924, 17 pages, mimeo, Wisconsin Historical Library, Madison, Wisconsin.

<sup>72</sup> Details of the various cruises and their arrangements are contained in, Philibert Papers, op. cit., box 154, "Fleet Maneuvers, 1927-36." The various cruises were: 1924--Hampton Roads to Culebra; 1925-- San Francisco to Hawaii; 1926--no records; 1927--New York to Narragansett Bay; 1928--San Francisco to Hawaii; 1929--San Pedro to Panama; 1930--Hampton Roads to Guantanamo Bay and, in 1931, a press flight in the Akron, a Navy dirigible. Personal invitations were sent by the Secretary of the Navy to each prospective guest. Operational arrangements with the fleet were made by the Information Section, Office of Naval Intelligence.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., passim.

<sup>74</sup> LCDR Robert S. Jones, "Recommendations for Navy Public Relations Based on Civilian Studies," unpublished Masters' theses, Boston University, 1958, pp. 23-24. Based on interview with Admiral Carney, 1953, quoted therein.

<sup>75</sup> Denby resigned over the teapot dome scandals to prevent the embarrassment of President Calvin C. Coolidge. Coolidge had succeeded Harding on August 2, 1923 when the President died in San Francisco while on a speaking tour.

<sup>76</sup> Chief of Naval Operations letter to all ships and stations, August 22, 1924, National Archives, op. cit., RG 80, 28642-49.

<sup>77</sup> Untitled outline of the functions of the Information Section, Philibert Papers, op. cit.. See also, Chief of Naval Operations memorandum of August 27, 1924, subject: Press Releases. File, Ibid..

<sup>78</sup> Office of Naval Operations memo dated August 27, 1924, to all Bureaus and Offices. National Archives, op. cit., RG 80, 28642-49:4.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Wallace S. Wharton, Lieutenant (Junior Grade), U.S. Naval Reserve Force, News Handling, Washington, Navy Department, GPO, 1924. Contained in Philibert Papers, Box 155.

<sup>81</sup> Information Concerning the U.S. Navy and other Navies: Information and Tables Compiled to Answer Popular Inquiry, Washington, Navy Department, GPO, 1925, 257 pp.

<sup>82</sup> See, for instance, Commandant, Twelfth Naval District, History of World War II, unpublished narrative, Vol. II, 956. Office of Naval Histories, Navy Department, rare manuscripts. Authority for augmentation of the naval reserve was provided by Public Law #512, 68th Congress, 1st session passed February 28, 1925. It was implemented by the Navy on July 1, 1925. Within this implementation was a special group of intelligence reserve volunteers available for "specialist duty," designated I-V(S). Those intended for use in information duties were included in this group. See, Harold T. Weiland, History of the Development of the U.S. Naval Reserve: 1889-1941, unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1950.

<sup>83</sup> Heffernan Interview, op. cit..

<sup>84</sup> Untitled outline of the functions of the Information section, op. cit. Heffernan Interview, op. cit..

<sup>85</sup> Heffernan Interview, op. cit.

<sup>86</sup> For discussions of policies of the Coolidge administration as they effected naval policy see, Rappaport, Navy League, 101-22; Bailey, Diplomatic History, Chapter 22.

Potter and Nimitz, Sea Power, 483-4; "A History of the Committee on Naval Affairs of the House of Representatives," House Document 81266--46--No. 287, December 27, 1946, pp. 3865-74 and Annual Reports of Secretary, (1924-1928).

<sup>87</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 102.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 103.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., 102-6.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 105-6.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 107-8.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., 98-100; and Bailey, Diplomatic History, 700-14.

<sup>94</sup>See, for instance, United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vols. 49-56 (1923-30), entries under publicity, passim.

<sup>95</sup>Lieutenant (Junior Grade) Hanson W. Baldwin, USNR, "Newspapers and the Navy," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, 55:1069 ff.

## CHAPTER V

Talk of Peace and Organization  
for War

## Chapter V

The failure of the Conference for the Limitation of Naval Armaments which met in Geneva from June 20 to August 4, 1927, served as a transition point for national military strategy and for popular opinion.<sup>1</sup> As the Conference wore on, Americans became increasingly disillusioned with the failure to reach an accord over the question of limitation of cruiser tonnage.<sup>2</sup> In fact, many Americans came to adopt the theory that the United States could better bring about an agreement by building a Navy great enough to force accord, or at least, by building as many cruisers as our defense needs required.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, President Coolidge himself seemed to be influenced in that direction when in his annual message to Congress in December, 1927, he said, "Where there is no treaty limitation, the size of the Navy which America is to have will be solely for America to determine."<sup>4</sup> The Department's recommendations for new construction in that same month reflected that thought and included twenty-five cruisers, five aircraft carriers, nine destroyers and thirty-two submarines, all to begin building within five years.

Collaterally, a significant movement was beginning for an international accord in the outlawry of war.<sup>5</sup> On April 6, 1927, French Foreign Minister Briand had proposed that France and the United States enter into

a bilateral agreement renouncing war as an instrument of national policy. The proposal captured the popular imagination and gathered momentum through the support of various peace groups and contingents within the press and Congress. In December, the United States amplified the proposal, suggesting the agreement be expanded to include the other powers.<sup>6</sup>

The negotiations leading to the formulation of the pact were duly publicized in an effort to answer criticisms before they were raised.<sup>7</sup> The Pact of Paris (more commonly called the Kellogg-Briand Agreement) was signed on August 27, 1928 by representatives of the United States and fourteen other powers. The treaty was eventually approved by almost all nations although Great Britain made certain reservations regarding the defense of her overseas empire.<sup>8</sup>

Though the Kellogg-Briand Pact had no power of enforcement and allowed "defensive war," public support for this instrument of peace was rekindled in the United States.<sup>9</sup> From 1928-1931, Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg supplemented this peace machinery with a series of eighteen bilateral arbitration treaties with non-American nations.<sup>10</sup>

The Naval Appropriations Bill, meanwhile, emerged from the Naval Affairs Committee cut to fifteen cruisers

and one carrier. It passed the House after heated debate in March, 1928, but died when the Senate adjourned on May 29, without considering it-- a victim, it was believed, of the popular antagonism against military spending.<sup>12</sup> The bill awaited the next session of Congress and was passed by the Senate in February, 1929 -- in the same session considering, paradoxically, the Kellogg-Briand Pact.<sup>13</sup> In the last days of the Coolidge administration, the Navy had obtained a small portion of the ships thought by the Navy to be required by the international situation, but fleet levels remained far below authorized treaty strength. With the advent of the Hoover administration prospects foretold that they were quite likely to remain so.<sup>14</sup>

#### The Hoover Administration

Herbert Hoover succeeded to the presidency deeply disturbed over Anglo-American relations, which had deteriorated -- largely over naval competition in cruiser construction.<sup>15</sup> The president lost no time in setting the diplomatic wheels in motion. In June, 1929, Ambassador Charles G. Dawes arrived in London and, two days later, began discussions with Prime Minister Ramsey MacDonald on many problems, including naval limitation. By July, MacDonald had reported to the House of Commons on the satisfactory results from the conferences and

recommended consideration of the deletion of five ships from the current construction program.<sup>16</sup> On the same day, Hoover announced suspension of planned construction on three cruisers.<sup>17</sup> In October MacDonald arrived in the United States for an eleven-day stay and met with Hoover, where plans were laid to convene another Limitation of Arms Conference in London in January, 1930.<sup>18</sup>

At the Conference, attended by representatives of the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan, work began to complete the job undertaken in Washington eight years earlier. The delegates addressed themselves to the cruiser problem and ratios in auxiliaries and submarines.<sup>19</sup> After a great deal of maneuvering on technical issues, an agreement was reached in April. Though all powers signed the document, France and Italy subscribed to only relatively unimportant clauses.<sup>20</sup>

The Conference succeeded in fixing the upper limits in all categories of ships, thus tightening a gap left open in the Washington Treaty. British and American navies were granted parity in all ship types, while the Japanese, who retained the 10-10-6 ratio in capital ships, obtained a greater share in getting an increase to 10-10-7 in light cruisers and other auxiliaries.<sup>21</sup>



The results of the Conference, though disappointing to many peace advocates, left much room for expansion of the United States fleet to parity with Great Britain within the upper tonnage limitation. With the financial crisis which had been visited on the United States with the collapse of the stock market in October, 1929, however, such a building program was unlikely to be proposed by the Hoover administration.<sup>22</sup>

#### The Development of Information Policy

Noting the lack of results of servicewide information programs, not so much at the departmental level but throughout the lower echelons of command, the Director of Naval Intelligence, in March, 1930, wrote the commandants of the geographically divided naval districts emphasizing again the importance of good press relations.<sup>23</sup> Enclosed with the letter was a guide to the conduct of effective press relations which provided, as a keynote, a statement of Navy policy enunciated by Secretary of the Navy Wilbur on October 6, 1928:

...to furnish the public with full information on the Navy not incompatible with military secrecy, including its activities at home and abroad, its educational features, and its contributions to science and industry...

It included, as well, a corollary to that policy:

...it follows that reasonable effort should be made to correct the impressions made by published misstatements or misrepresentation of facts (not opinions) concerning the Navy and naval activities. Unless steps are taken to do this the reading public will be deceived and much or little harm will result, according to the gravity of the errors published and the extent to which they are circulated.<sup>25</sup>

The basic letter concluded with a request that commandants forward an analysis of operations with the press within their respective commands, "in order that a study of methods and results may be made and published ...for the general guidance of the service."<sup>26</sup>

Secretary of the Navy, Charles F. Adams, followed up on the Director of Naval Intelligence's letter by issuing, on November 17, 1930, a directive outlining the duties of the Information Section.<sup>27</sup> Cancelling all previous information instructions, the instruction established formal procedures as well as outlined information policy:

2. The Information Section, Office of Naval Intelligence, is the Navy Department's central agency for supplying to the public full information of the Navy not incompatible with military secrecy.

3. This work is accomplished by means of press relations; by cooperation with radio broadcasting agencies, motion picture, photographic and news reel companies; and by complying with requests made for general information about the Navy.

4. The Information Section is governed by the following approved principles, applicable throughout the Navy Department.

(a) to avoid any discrimination in dissemination of news.

(b) to issue no statements derogatory to, or critical of, other branches of the government.

(c) Neither to enunciate nor to comment upon policies.

5. The Secretary of the Navy determines policies, and when these are to be made public, they normally shall be announced at daily press conferences which are arranged for by the Aide to the Secretary assisted by an officer from the Information Section.

6. Questions involving the supply of naval information to the public that concern the press, photographic agencies, sound and news reel companies, moving picture companies and broadcasting companies, when received in any of the offices of the Navy Department will be referred to the Office of Naval Intelligence, Information Section...That office will then consult with the responsible offices concerned, do preliminary work that may be necessary in arranging for representatives of the above agencies to witness naval activities, notify all parties interested and handle the required correspondence, always acting in accordance with the policy of the Navy Department.

7. All bureaus and offices in the Navy Department will cooperate with the Information Section in the accomplishment of these duties, and each bureau and office concerned will designate an officer with necessary clerical assistance to supply the Information Section with such data as may be requested, with news items of general interest for press releases, and with suitable illustrations when available.

Included as an enclosure to the letter was the same guide to effective press relations which had been circulated by the Director of Naval Intelligence.

The following day, the Chief of Naval Operations forwarded the Secretary's letter throughout the naval operating commands, "for the information and guidance of the naval service."<sup>28</sup>

A memorandum from the Director of the Information Section to the Director of Naval Intelligence indicated in December that a survey of all naval districts had revealed that the Navy Department system was in effect and that all districts had reported satisfactory relations with the press.<sup>29</sup> The survey was taken to assess the servicewide diffusion of information policies and came on the heels of Hanson Baldwin's criticisms.

#### Special Events

In January, 1929, the aircraft carriers Lexington and Saratoga participated for the first time in the attack phase of a fleet exercise, simulating an attack on the Panama Canal.<sup>30</sup> So impressive was the performance of their aircraft that the 1930 maneuvers were scheduled to employ again, for the first time, a tactical unit built around the carriers.

As a part of the 1930 maneuvers, the carriers conducted a special demonstration for interested members

of Congress and for the press.<sup>31</sup> A special press party was embarked in the Lexington to insure adequate and complete coverage. Due to space limitations, the representatives of the media drew lots to make an arrangement for pooling their material.<sup>32</sup> The seventeen members of the press party were: four from press associations, three representing still picture services, three from the silent news reels and seven for sound news reels. Multiple representation was included to allow complete coverage from several vantage points, some of the representatives spread between a photographic aircraft during aerial maneuvers, on board the Lexington, and on board the Aroostook which maneuvered to a position close aboard the carrier during the flight demonstrations. Additionally, a special representative of Western Union was embarked to take the press files back to Hampton Roads immediately upon completion of the demonstration. A special communication circuit was held in readiness for the transmission of press traffic should that be required.<sup>33</sup>

The news coverage of this event was but a prelude for what was to follow. On May 7, 1930, one hundred twenty-five planes from the carriers Saratoga, Lexington and Langley began a three-day exhibition tour, flying

from Hampton Roads to New York and then on to Providence, Rhode Island, Boston and Lowell, Massachusetts and Hartford, Connecticut. On their return flight, the torpedo, bomber, fighter and scout planes flew over Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington and Norfolk.<sup>34</sup>

Accompanying these flying reviews were representatives of the press, who had, again, made pool arrangements for coverage from a special aircraft.<sup>35</sup> The two demonstrations, those flown from the carrier and the touring flying reviews, were staged, interestingly enough, just a few days following the signing of the London Naval Treaty on April 22, 1930.

#### Further Demise

The remainder of the Hoover administration brought no encouragement to the advocates of preparedness. In 1931, with Japan but only 5,728 tons below treaty allowances and Great Britain 20,874 tons below, the United States deficiency amounted to 153,698 tons. Needed to attain treaty strength, according to the United States Navy League, were: four carriers, three large and seven small-gun cruisers, twenty-five submarines and over 100 destroyers.<sup>36</sup> The administration's proposals for that year were: one aircraft carrier, two six-inch (small-gun) cruisers, four submarines and eleven destroyers. Even that conservative proposal

failed to get action as the Congress adjourned in May without entering the bill on its legislative calendar.<sup>37</sup>

Neither the Congress nor the President, it would seem, had any inclination to maintain the fleet at or near treaty strength. In September, Hoover announced a drastic cut in the naval building program for 1931-32 and its elimination in 1932-33 in the name of world harmony and domestic economy.<sup>37</sup> The Navy's leadership, under Secretary Charles F. Adams and Admiral William V. Pratt, showed little inclination to challenge the chief executive's policies or directions.<sup>38</sup>

In the Far East, in Manchuria in 1931 and in Shanghai in 1932, signs of future trouble for the United States had begun to appear. The hope of a just and true peace through international conciliation appeared to be progressively dimming.

#### Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Navy

The inauguration of Franklin D. Roosevelt brought to the White House a man who knew a great deal about the Navy. He had served for seven years as Assistant Secretary to Josephus Daniels, spanning the period prior to and during World War I. The domestic economy which President Roosevelt inherited was far from recovery.<sup>39</sup> At the outset, it looked as though domestic considerations would influence a continuance of Hoover's

disarmament policies.<sup>40</sup>

A plan for warship construction was, however, included in the President's program for increased public works. On June 16, Roosevelt signed Executive Order 6174 which allocated \$283 million of Public Works Administration appropriations for the construction of thirty-two warships over a three-year period.<sup>41</sup>

#### Internal Preoccupation

The situations and events leading to international conflict and world war are known widely and need not be explored in this study. Among them: the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, the invasion of Shanghai in 1932, Adolph Hitler's succession to Chancellor of Germany in 1933, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, German occupation of the Rhineland and the beginning of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, the Japanese invasion of China in 1937, the Munich agreements over Czechoslovakia in 1938, and the climactic events leading to war in Europe in 1939.

The failure of conciliation undertaken by the League of Nations<sup>42</sup> infected popular opinion in the United States with the desire to remain neutral and avoid involvements in both Europe and the Far East. Reflective of these opinions were the legislative acts programming Philippine independence (1934) and



the progressive neutrality acts of 1935-7.<sup>43</sup> Pre-occupation with internal affairs was a characteristic of the time -- not only in the United States but in other nations of the world as well.<sup>44</sup> Divergent national courses were bound for collision.<sup>45</sup>

#### Armaments and Talk of Disarmament

Through the leadership of the President and Carl Vinson, Chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee, mustering the support of the administration forces in the House, the Vinson-Trammel Act was passed in March, 1934. The bill provided authorization for construction to bring the United States Navy up to full treaty strength -- the first comprehensive measure for ship construction since World War I. Unfortunately, the authorization did not gain appropriations to implement it.<sup>46</sup>

Under a provision of the Washington Naval Conference, the second London Naval Conference met in late 1935 with little hope of success. The Japanese, who demanded but did not receive full parity in ship tonnage, withdrew from the discussions. Although an agreement was reached and a treaty signed in March, 1936, it was an instrument watered with escape clauses which held little meaning in light of the nonadherence of both Italy and Japan.<sup>47</sup>

President Roosevelt concluded that it was unwise to fall behind in a rapidly rearming world and, in January, 1938, proposed to Congress a \$1 billion naval appropriation. Known as the Second Vinson Act, the bill authorizing an increase in total tonnage of under-age naval vessels amounting to forty thousand tons for aircraft carriers and authorizing three thousand aircraft, was passed in May.<sup>48</sup> Rearmament was under way.

#### Development of the Public Affairs Function

From a standpoint of public interest in and concern for the national security and military and naval policy, the early and mid-1930's provided little opportunity for development of the public affairs function. Refinement and codification of public relations policies and procedures, however, continued.

In 1932, the Navy Department issued a comprehensive set of instructions governing Navy cooperation with producers in the production of motion picture "plays."<sup>49</sup> The following March, Secretary of the Navy Claude A. Swanson<sup>50</sup> issued a directive to all ships and stations detailing specific information which could be released concerning Navy ships under the Washington and London treaties and specifically restricting the release of information of a technical nature.<sup>51</sup>

In 1935, the Department issued a General Order emphasizing the care which should be taken by officers

writing on professional subjects.<sup>52</sup> The order noted that the Department would maintain no censorship on discussions or articles but cautioned, "unrestricted utterance or publication of fact and opinion may divulge information which it is not advisable to make public, and may constitute an offense against military discipline..." While a veiled threat, it was a notable improvement over the repressive General Order 139 issued by Secretary Meyer in 1911.

In August, Secretary Swanson reemphasized the manner in which he intended information to be made public in a memorandum to all bureaus and offices of the Navy Department:<sup>53</sup>

The Public Relations Branch<sup>54</sup> of the Office of Naval Intelligence has been asked by newspapermen from time to time to corroborate items of indisputable Navy Department origin that have appeared in the press but which have not been cleared through its press section.

Instances have occurred where a reporter was refused information by the Public Relations Branch on the advice of the bureau or office concerned and subsequently an opposition paper obtained the information by establishing contact directly with an officer or employee of the bureau or office.

Such departures from the regular procedure, while seldom serious in themselves, tend to compromise the Navy Department's machinery for the simultaneous and impartial distribution of public information concerning the Navy Department and the naval service.

In order to preserve a strict impartiality and uniform treatment toward all correspondents, to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort, to obviate confusion, to relieve all bureaus and

offices of the annoyance of importunate queries and to insure the simultaneous release of officially visaed information to the public, all heads of bureaus and offices will take steps to insure that information suitable for publication is normally cleared through the Public Relations Branch (Press Section) of the Office of Naval Intelligence.

To this end, officers of the several bureaus and activities of the Navy Department designated as liaison officers with the Navy Department Public Relations Branch will maintain close contact with the Press Section and furnish such items as are suitable for publication. Where circumstances make a departure from this procedure advisable the responsible official who releases information to a reporter or special writer should communicate to the Public Relations Branch the substance of his remarks.

/s/ Claude A. Swanson

Again in November, 1938, Secretary Swanson found it necessary to reemphasize the instructions<sup>55</sup> because, "the...(instructions are) not in all cases being observed. It is directed that...(they) be brought to the attention of and strictly complied with by officers and civil employees of bureaus and offices of the Navy Department." The occasion for this emphasis, according to B. L. Austin, then a Lieutenant Commander in charge of the Press Section, was the multiplicity of news leaks throughout the Department.<sup>56</sup> Various stringers for the news media working in the bureaus and offices were circumventing the news release policy. Admiral William D. Leahy, Chief of Naval Operations, insisted that the leaks be plugged and the central source of

news become, and remain, the Press Section.<sup>57</sup>

The work accomplished by the Public Relations Branch is well summarized by the following excerpts from its annual report, July 1, 1938, to June 30, 1939:<sup>58</sup>

Close liaison is continually maintained by the Public Relations officer with the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations in order to keep his (sic) office properly informed on all phases of policy.

...During the past fiscal year 900 formal releases of important news were made to the press. This compares with 550 such releases for last year (1938). These releases vary in length from 1 to 49 pages each. One hundred and fifty copies of each release are made available to the press at the Navy Department Press Room and at the National Press Club, and 30 copies are distributed for information within the Navy Department. The number of informal releases of information of interest to special groups is indeterminate, but is estimated to have increased during the year in about the same ratio as the formal releases. The Public Relations officer and the Press officer are available night and day, seven days a week, to answer queries of the press which have noticeably increased in number with the mounting tension in international affairs and consequent increase of public interest in national defense...

The Public Relations officer and the Press officer attend all White House press conferences and inform the interested senior officers and the Secretary of any discussions of service interest. We also watch the ticker tape, newspapers and magazines and inform responsible senior officers promptly of pertinent bulletins and articles...

...Biographies have been prepared and filed of all senior officers who have figured in press releases or for which specific requests have been received...

...Speeches and articles by naval officers containing data on current naval topics are

mimeographed and distributed to the public upon request...material and assistance furnished officers in preparation for speeches...arrangements are made for speakers before patriotic societies and similar organizations...including radio broadcasts...

...Arrangements are made for cooperation with broadcasting companies, including all major networks, in presentation of programs of factual naval interest.

...Arrangements are made for accredited press representatives and photographers to take passage in naval vessels to cover specific naval activities when requested and deemed to be of paramount interest. The coverage of Cruiser Division Seven's South American good will cruise is one... illustration.

...Cooperation with all major newsreel companies in arranging for filming current naval activities of public interest.

...During the past year this office has answered approximately 6,000 letters in reply to queries for factual information from colleges, schools, individuals, societies, libraries, newspapers, magazines, writers, etc. Many of these requests require considerable research work...number of mimeograph stencils out - 2,092. Number of sheets of mimeograph paper used - 495,600.

...Photographs have been supplied to newspapers, magazines, organizations, and, in some cases, feature writers, when requested and when impracticable to obtain them from other sources.

...This office arranges for still and motion picture companies to photograph naval subjects. U.S. Navy Photographer's identification cards were issued to ninety accredited photographers operating in the Severn and Potomac areas this year.

...Cooperation with motion pictures - the Public Relations officer is a member of the Navy Department Motion Picture Board. He assists in reviewing and censoring of motion picture scenarios in which naval cooperation has been requested...of the

seventeen motion picture scenarios submitted to the Motion Picture Board,...five have been approved...two completed...and three are... in production.

...In addition to his usual activities, the officer in charge of this branch is Secretary of the Navy Department Navy Day Committee. Ground work for the celebration of Navy Day, October 27, is usually started in June. This office cooperates with the Navy League, the Naval Reserve and patriotic organizations in promoting the success of Navy Day. Seventeen articles and speeches, bearing on the subject of the Navy were distributed to the naval service as basic material for press and speeches on Navy Day...

...During the President's cruise in the Houston, August 1938, this office was designated by the White House to handle news releases concerning the cruise...<sup>59</sup>

The staff required to produce this work was eight: Commander Leland P. Lovette, Officer-in-Charge; Lieutenant Commander B. L. Austin, Assistant for Press Relations; Lieutenant W. G. Beecher, Jr., Assistant for Photography; two civilian assistants, Miss Helen Philibert for the Press Room and Miss Alice Costello, for the Public Relations Branch, plus two stenographers and a Marine orderly.<sup>60</sup>

Two stories, mentioned only in the annual report as outstanding events, yielded further insight into the operations of the Public Relations Branch -- the fleet visit to New York in May, 1939, and the loss of the submarine Squalus in that same month.

During May, 6-16, a special contingent of the Atlantic Fleet arrived in New York for the opening of the World's Fair.<sup>61</sup> During its stay, over a half million visitors went aboard fleet units. Special groups of visitors, among them 100 publishers from the Newspaper Editors and Publishers Association then holding a convention in New York, over three hundred working press representatives visiting individually and in groups and five hundred Children of the American Revolution. Arrangements were coordinated by Austin and Miss Philibert from Washington and Lieutenant H. W. Gordon and two yeomen from the New York publicity office. Letters of tribute and appreciation for the outstanding arrangements were received from many guests: Kenneth Hogate, president of the Wall Street Journal; Edward Bartlett, city editor of the New York Sun and many others including Edward L. Bernays and T. J. Ross, prominent public relations counselors. New York Times military editor, Hanson Baldwin, commented, "...I think you did a swell job up here under considerable difficulties and that the Navy Department deserves commendation for sending you...it was a real help to us of the press and establishes a precedent which should be followed, in my opinion, in all such future fleet visits to New York..."<sup>62</sup>



On May 23, 1939, the submarine Squalus was lost on a practice dive off Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Fifty-nine of her crew were saved in rescue operations; twenty-six perished. On a previous submarine accident with the S-4, members of the press had received no cooperation from the Navy, and had hired a tug to get to the scene where they were greeted with fire hoses turning them away from coverage of the salvage operations. Determined to provide full information in the Squalus disaster, Austin went directly to Admiral Leahy and received full authority to arrange complete press coverage. A special telegraph circuit was installed in the press room in the Navy Department to facilitate direct communications with the recovery forces and special fleet units shuttled press representatives to and from the scene.<sup>63</sup> The sympathetic coverage obtained was brought about by a significant departure from policies at similar disasters in the past.<sup>64</sup>

The last of the pre-war training instructions under Naval Intelligence, a 300-page manual consisting of monographs dealing with various aspects of public relations organization and practice, was issued in the summer 1939.<sup>65</sup> On the first of September, war began in Europe when Germany invaded Poland.

Following declaration of war by Great Britain

and France upon Germany on September 3, the United States proclaimed its neutrality on the 5th. On the next day a United States naval patrol was established in the Atlantic and Caribbean to observe the movements of belligerent ships. On September 8, President Roosevelt declared a limited national emergency, ordering an increase in the strength of all military forces -- one of many measures which followed in rapid order attempting to put the United States on a war footing.

In January, 1940, Charles Edison assumed the duties of Secretary of the Navy, a post vacated by the death on July 7, 1939, of Claude Swanson. Edison, in turn, was succeeded by Frank Knox on July 11, 1940, after the former had resigned in June.

#### The Mobilization of Public Relations<sup>66</sup>

In July, 1940, the Public Relations Branch of the Division of Naval Intelligence was staffed by thirteen personnel: the officer-in-charge; three officers and an experienced civilian assistant in the press section; one officer and an assistant who handled general information requests, pictorial and radio duties; plus four clerical personnel and two Marine orderlies.

Commander H. R. Thurber became Officer-in-Charge on July 16. His first orders were to "build up the office for an emergency."<sup>67</sup> Records of Naval Reserves slated for war-time duty in public relations were

reviewed and tentative selections were made of individuals who might head the individual sections of an expanded office. War plans, written in 1924 and revised through 1939, were reviewed and modified as necessary. Although there was no legal requirement for reserve officers to enter onto active duty in 1940,<sup>68</sup> selected individuals were interviewed and asked to come on active service if their personal situations would permit.

Plans for the expansion envisioned a director, an assistant director, and operational sections to include: administration, plans, press, radio, pictorial, scripts, civic liaison and naval districts, and a reference section.

In 1940, three officers reported as section heads: Lieutenant (Junior Grade), Victor F. Blakeslee, USN, (Retired), in August, to head the scripts section which was charged with preparation of speeches for high-ranking civilian officials and officers of the Navy Department and, as well, with assistance to writers and publishers; Lieutenant Commander W. M. Galvin, U.S. Naval Reserve, in September, former Secretary of the Navy League, to head the plans section; and Lieutenant Commander E. John Long, U.S. Naval Reserve, formerly on the executive staff of National Geographic magazine, in December, to take control of the pictorial

section which was, at that time, issuing approximately seven thousand photographs per year.

In February, 1941, two more officers assumed duties as section chiefs: Lieutenant Commander James G. Stahlman, U.S. Naval Reserve who had volunteered for the duty, formerly editor and publisher of the Nashville (Tennessee)Banner, to assume control of the civic liaison and naval districts section; and Lieutenant Commander Norvelle W. Sharpe, U.S. Naval Reserve, former independent radio consultant, to head the radio section. Lieutenant Commander, W. S. Wharton, U.S. Naval Reserve, formerly of the editorial staff of the Oregon Journal, reported a short time later and became the head of the press section in September, relieving Lieutenant Commander R. W. Berry, U.S. Navy, who had acted, as well, as the branch's Assistant Director.

One of the primary jobs in reorganization was undertaken by Stahlman who made a tour of the naval districts to evaluate the effectiveness and needs of the servicewide information organization.

#### Positive Steps

In March, 1941, the office of the Chief of Naval Operations issued a directive throughout the naval service outlining the proper function of public relations, declaring it a function of command and emphasizing,

"...it is not the function of Navy officers to endeavor to police or otherwise monitor publications, radio stations, or other media of information. It is the function of Navy officers to keep the public informed of the activities of the Navy, as compatible with military security."<sup>69</sup>

Two days later, the office of the Chief of Naval Operations issued a directive to the commandants of all naval districts which, effectively, insured the development of a public relations organization throughout the shore establishment:<sup>70</sup>

...it is the function of naval command to give prompt and careful attention to the legitimate requirements of public dissemination agencies. In the Navy Department, this is accomplished through the Public Relations Branch which is a subdivision of Naval Intelligence. In each naval district, this shall be accomplished through a Public Relations Branch, adequately manned and equipped.

The commandant of each naval district will survey the public relations requirements of his district...cognizance should be taken of the advisability of placing or designating a public relations officer in each state, or in each large publishing center, or in each zone where there is an important naval activity.

Requests for additional personnel and equipment for district public relations will be submitted not later than April 10, 1941.

The directive included a sixteen-page guide outlining the basis of a public relations program by which the commandants could assess their needs.

### Establishment of the Office of Public Relations

In April, Secretary Frank Knox formally removed the public affairs function in the Navy from within the Office of Naval Intelligence and placed it directly under his own control.<sup>71</sup>

1. The Office of Public Relations is established as of 1 May 1941 as an independent office directly under the Secretary of the Navy, and it will have the same functions and responsibilities as those of the present Public Relations Branch of the Division of Naval Intelligence. The head of the office will carry the title of Director of Public Relations.
2. The personnel, furnishings, and equipment of the present Public Relations Branch of the Division of Naval Intelligence will be transferred to the newly created office of public relations.
3. All correspondence of the new office will form a part of the Secretary's files and will bear the office originating symbol OOR. Correspondence antedating 1 May 1941 will remain a part of the files of the Division of Naval Intelligence.

Thus had the function returned to the Office of the Secretary, where first it was formally established.

On May 1, 1941, the Office of Public Relations began operations. Acting as its head until the May 27 arrival of Admiral Arthur J. Hepburn was Commander H. R. Thurber. On that date, the personnel of the Office of Public Relations numbered fifty-five. Another thirty-eight were on the way.

In April, arrangements had been made to have

Lieutenant Commander Waldo F. Drake, U.S. Naval Reserve, formerly on the staff of the Los Angeles Times, ordered to the staff of the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet as Fleet Public Relations Officer and Lieutenant Commander S. B. Wright, U.S. Naval Reserve, formerly of Paramount News, as Fleet Public Relations Officer for the Atlantic Fleet.

On May 9, following the creation of the Office of Public Relations under the Secretary, the Chief of Naval Operations directed naval district commandants to transfer their public relations offices from the cognizance of Naval Intelligence to a separate status directly under the commandant's control.<sup>72</sup> The framework for the new organization, by now, was complete.

The public affairs function which had begun informally at the inception of the Navy, followed a tempestuous path. It now faced its greatest challenge. In his address to the first assemblage of public relations officers in July, 1941, Secretary Knox sounded the keynote for future public affairs operations:

...May I try to impress upon you...how vitally important it is that we do get...(naval affairs) into current discussion and reading, because, after all, we are not going to have much trouble whatever in getting the necessary appropriations for the enlargement of our naval strength, because right now we have a popular fear to support us. The time will come when those fears will subside, but yet

it will be just exactly as acutely necessary for our future safety and security that the sea-power and air-power that we are now building up shall be retained against a future danger as it is that we shall build it up in the first place, and if we are going to have that kind of popular support for an adequate Navy in the future -- when our present alarm shall have subsided and our fears gone by -- then we must take advantage of this time when the people are interested in the Navy to make them so thoroughly Navy-minded that when the time comes for pruning expenditures and cutting down expenses there shall always be present in the minds of the people as an automatic reflex that if we want to be safe, we have got to be strong on the high seas.<sup>73</sup>



<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of the international and national events which effected national and naval policy between 1927 and 1941 see Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People, (4th ed.) (New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1950), Chapters 42-45; Hereafter cited as Bailey, Diplomatic History; Julius August Furer, Rear Admiral, USN (Ret.), Administration of the Navy Department in World War II (Washington, Navy Department, 1959), 56-87, 94-100, and passim; Armin Rappaport, The Navy League of the United States (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1962), Chapters 6-8, hereafter cited as Rappaport, Navy League; Clark R. Mollenhoff, The Pentagon (New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1967) Chapters 4-5; E. B. Potter and Chester W. Nimitz, eds., Sea Power, A Naval History (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), 483-551, hereafter cited as Potter and Nimitz, Sea Power.

<sup>2</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 110-12.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Bailey, Diplomatic History, 707-9.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>See Kellogg statement, Bailey, Diplomatic History, 708n.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 709.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 116. This represented a considerable reduction to the President's proposals for 25 cruisers, 5 aircraft carriers, 9 destroyers and 32 submarines.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 116-7.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 117-22.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 123 and Bailey, Diplomatic History, 718.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 124.

<sup>16</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 124.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Bailey, Diplomatic History, 718-9.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 719-20.

<sup>23</sup>Director of Naval Intelligence letter to commandants of naval districts; Op-16-F, Serial A8-3/A7-1, dated March 15, 1930. Records of the Office of Public Relations, Navy Department; Office of Naval History, Philibert Papers, file: Public Relations Policy, 1930-40. Hereafter cited as Philibert Papers.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., enclosure (a), p. 1.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., enclosure (a), p.3.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., enclosure (a), p.3.

<sup>27</sup>Secretary of the Navy letter to all bureaus and offices, Serial EN3(13)/A3-1(1)(301117) dated November 17, 1930, Subject: Information Section, Office of Naval Intelligence -- duties of, and assistance to be given to.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., Chief of Naval Operations letter dated November 18, 1930.

<sup>29</sup>Memorandum for the Director of Naval Intelligence from the Director of the Information Section, Serial Op-16-F dated December 16, 1930. Philibert Papers, op. cit..

<sup>30</sup>See, Lieutenant Commander David M. Cooney, A Chronology of the U.S. Navy (New York, Franklin Watts, Inc., 1965). The two carriers built on cruiser hulls, had been commissioned a little over a year before. Some perspective of time required for construction and fitting out can be gained in the realization that Congress had authorized the conversion on July 1, 1922.

<sup>31</sup>For details of the arrangements see, Chief of Naval Operations letter to Commandant, 5th Naval District, C.O., USS Lexington and C.O., USS Aroostook, Op-16-F dated April 22, 1930, Subject: USS Lexington press and photographic arrangements for exhibition flights for Congressional party--April 26, 1930, with enclosures. Philibert Papers, op. cit..

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., enclosures (B) and (C). This represents the first incidence noted in this study of the formal limitation of press coverage and formation of a pooling arrangement.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>For details of this aerial demonstration see, Navy Press Room Release dated May 2, 1930.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., copies of pooling agreements attached. An interesting sidelight is found in the signatories to these agreements: representing Pathe News was Stephen T. Early and, Paramount News, Marvin H. McIntyre. Both were later to serve on President Franklin D. Roosevelt's public relations staff. McIntyre, it will be remembered, previously had served as manager of the Navy News Bureau during the period when F. D. Roosevelt was Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

<sup>36</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 135-36. The effects upon naval strategy of large versus small-gun cruisers is contained in Harold and Margaret Sprout, Toward a New Order of Sea Power (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1940), 212 ff.

<sup>37</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 142.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., Chapter 7, passim.

<sup>39</sup>Bailey, Diplomatic History, 732.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 157-8

<sup>42</sup>While recognized as an oversimplification, it is nonetheless valuable for its impact upon the peace movement in the United States which propounded the virtues of disarmament. See, Stephen S. Goodspeed, The Nature and Function of International Organization (New York, Oxford University Press, 1959) Chapters 2 and 3; and

Inis L. Claude, Jr., Swords Into Plowshares (New York, Random House, 1961 (rev. ed.)), Chapters 2,3; also valuable is William L. Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich (New York, Simon & Schuster, 1959), Chapters 5,7,9,17.

<sup>43</sup>Bailey, Diplomatic History, Chapter 44.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., and Goodspeed, International Organization, op. cit., Chapter 44.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Bailey, Diplomatic History, 742 and Rappaport, Navy League, 165-6, and "History of the Naval Affairs Committee," op. cit., 3871.

<sup>47</sup>Bailey, Diplomatic History, 743, and Rappaport, Navy League, 171-2.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Chief of Naval Operations letter to Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Fleet, commandants all naval districts and bureaus and offices, Navy Department; Op-138, Serial A7-4(320805) dated August 10, 1932 with enclosure, "Policy of the Navy Department concerning cooperation in production of commercial motion picture plays." Philibert Papers, op.cit..

<sup>50</sup>Secretary of the Navy Swanson had succeeded Charles F. Adams on March 4, 1933.

<sup>51</sup>Secretary of the Navy letter to all ships and stations, Subject: Policy with respect to publicity regarding naval vessels, Op-138, Serial FS/A7-1 (330116) dated March 9, 1933. Philibert Papers, op.cit..

<sup>52</sup>General Order No. 9 of May 13, 1935.

<sup>53</sup>Secretary of the Navy memorandum to all bureaus and offices; Subject: Centralization of Public Information, Serial A7-1(350801) dated August 1, 1935. Philibert Papers, op. cit..

<sup>54</sup>

This is the first incidence uncovered in primary source materials indicating a change in title of the former Information Section, Office of Naval Intelligence. While there are several internal memoranda referring to it generally as "public relations" throughout the period 1932-35, no retitling document has been found.

<sup>55</sup> See Secretary of the Navy letter to the chiefs of all bureaus and offices, Subject: Centralization of Public Information, Serial A7-1(350801) dated November 10, 1938. Philibert Papers, op. cit..

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Admiral B. L. Austin, USN (Ret.) conducted August 29, 1967. Hereafter cited as Austin Interview.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Memorandum from Officer-in-Charge, Public Relations Branch to Director of Naval Intelligence dated June 29, 1939. Philibert Papers, op cit..

<sup>59</sup> During the Roosevelt administration, it was common for the President's press secretary to work directly with the service information organizations. Austin Interview, op. cit..

<sup>60</sup> Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Navy to the President of the United States, (1938-39).

<sup>61</sup> "Public Relations Records of the Atlantic Fleet Visit to New York Worlds Fair, 6-16 May 1939." Folder in Philibert Papers, box 154., op. cit..

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., Hanson Baldwin letter to B. L. Austin of May 11, 1939.

<sup>63</sup> Austin Interview.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., it is interesting that motion picture coverage of this event was subsequently used by several television networks when the USS Thresher was lost during a test dive April 10, 1963.

<sup>65</sup> See, Training Instructions for Public Relations Personnel of the Naval Intelligence Service. Washington: Office of Naval Intelligence, GPO, 1939. Philibert Papers, op. cit..

<sup>66</sup> Details of the mobilization of the Public Relations Branch have been provided by Admiral H. R. Thurber, USN (Ret.) who was officer-in-charge from July 16, 1940 to May 1, 1941 when the office became an independent organization directly under the Secretary of the Navy. Details are taken from a report from

Thurber to the Director of Naval History, memorandum to the Director of Naval History, Subject: "History of Navy Public Relations in World War II," undated, Philibert Papers. The major points of this report were verified with Admiral Thurber in telephone conversations conducted August 15 - September 1, 1967. Admiral Thurber died in October 1967 before detailed correspondence on the subject could be undertaken. Excerpts from the portion of his report dealing with the period, July 1940-May, 1941, have been included as an appendix.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>The Secretary of the Navy placed organized Naval Reservists on short notice on October 5, 1940. The Naval Reserve was not activated, however, until June 12, 1941.

<sup>69</sup>Office of the Chief of Naval Operations directive to the Naval Service, subject: Public Relations, Instructions Concerning, Serial 247216 dated March 17, 1941. Underlined portions appear in boldface type in the directive.

<sup>70</sup>Office of the Chief of Naval Operations directive to all commandants of naval districts, Subject: Public Relations, Serial 380616 dated March 19, 1941. The effectiveness of this directive in establishing a district-wide public relations organization can be seen in, "United States Naval Administration in World War II," unpublished narrative histories in the Naval Histories Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, D.C., especially volumes of the 4th, 5th, and 12th naval districts.

<sup>71</sup>Secretary of the Navy directive to all bureaus and offices, Navy Department, Subject: Office of Public Relations, Establishment of; En-1-17/A3-1(410428), serial 959416 dated April 28, 1941.

<sup>72</sup>Office of the Chief of Naval Operations directive to the commandants, naval districts, Subject: Public Relations, Serial 2(A10509) dated May 9, 1941.

## CHAPTER VI

### Summary and Conclusions

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A retrospective view of the development of the public affairs function in the United States Navy must consider, as well, the political and social contexts which fostered its evolution.

In its earliest practice, in the formation of the United States Navy, such public affairs functions as there were were directed at marshaling political support for legislative action. The limited success of that campaign, however, primarily was attributable to external factors -- the actions of the Barbary corsairs and the French privateers -- which dramatized the need for an adequate seagoing force.

The War of 1812 demonstrated to Americans the inadequacy of a military and naval strategy based on defensive considerations -- reliance upon militia and upon concepts of the Navy as a passive coastal defense force. The strategic lessons which should have been apparent from that war went unlearned and continued to have effect upon the public affairs function throughout the following century.

The Civil War, by its nature, brought to the fore a requirement for information of military and naval operations to be disseminated directly to the citizenry through the media of mass communications.

There were, as well, other factors which hastened



the development of the public affairs function in this period: the technological progress made in the telegraph which could speed information across the continent, broadening the information consumer base and, thereby, the requirement for more information; interservice competition for both funds and manpower which sought support through popular appeals; and the requirements of military security which presaged the need of a formal organization which could operate in the information environment without divulging information of military value to an enemy.

It was in the Civil War that the essentiality of an informed public was demonstrated graphically to naval strategists when a widespread fear along the eastern seaboard clamored for a departure from sound strategy in favor of a heterogeneous posture of fragmented forces -- the first firm inkling that public opinion in operation, especially an alarmed opinion, had profound implications for naval strategy.

In the wake of the Civil War came the natural revulsion to military preparedness. Not so much a characteristically American syndrome, as so often it has been described, but, rather, a more characteristically human desire to rebuild a nation and reestablish political order.

The Civil War had brought attendant progress in technological development -- progress which had deep meaning for naval strategy. The use of armor plate, the potential of steam propulsion, the capabilities of high-velocity naval rifles and exploding shells -- all demanded of the Navy an active transitional program as well as a doctrinal revolution. To facilitate these changes required, in the period between the Civil War and the Spanish-American War, the understanding and the support of the public. These were the forces which operated to sustain the public affairs function in the Navy.

Cooperation by the federal agencies in exhibitions, beginning with the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876 and continuing through to the Panama-Pacific Exhibition in San Francisco in 1914-16, reflected, in President Grant's direction for cooperation, a concern, "...to illustrate the functions...of the government in time of peace and its resources as a war power, and thereby...demonstrate the nature of our institutions and their adaptations to the wants of the people..." -- a conscious attempt to interpret the government to the people.

The writings of Alfred Thayer Mahan in the 1890's heralded a revolution in naval strategy. Though his theories were widely acclaimed by naval strategists,

accepted by political theorists and pragmatists alike, quoted and expounded upon both in and out of the halls of Congress, their diffusion to the American public at large taken for granted, the popular hysteria which swept the eastern seaboard of the United States at the outset of the Spanish-American War urging a complete departure from the dictates of sound naval strategy demonstrated clearly the fallibility of information dissemination. The concept of command of the sea was challenged seriously by the popular demand for a strategy of coastal defense.

News coverage of the Spanish-American War was unique in the annals of reporting. Virtually uninhibited travel by reporters and nearly unlimited access to operations provided detailed, if not always accurate, accounts throughout the military campaign. Again, considerations of military security were raised by the intelligence community in noting Spain's use of these press accounts. This concern, coupled with the success of the Japanese in keeping hidden the movements of their fleet prior to the Battle of Tsushima (May, 1905) in the Russo-Japanese War, led the Navy's General Board, in December, to recommend the creation of a Navy Information Bureau to exercise control over information made public in time of national peril.

The administration of President Theodore Roosevelt

advanced the mergence of foreign and military policy with a consideration for the effects of public opinion upon that policy. A natural outgrowth from this philosophy was the Navy General Board's enunciation, in 1913, of the need for naval policy to be made public.

Roosevelt's administration was marked, too, by a popular appeal for continuous and orderly development of military forces as a foundation of national military power, a requisite with the emergence of the United States as a world power. The presidential leadership of public opinion took many forms. In naval affairs, the most dramatic moves to popularize the Navy were the fleet reviews and the round-the-world cruise of the battleship fleet.

In this same era was established an independent civilian body whose purpose was to strengthen the U.S. Navy through direct appeals to the people of the nation -- the Navy League of the United States. Though the Navy's role in the creation and development of the League remains obscure, active Navy cooperation with League events doubtless had salutary effects.

The building program of President Roosevelt brought yet another naval need into focus -- that of increasing numbers of personnel. The attendant requirement for sustained publicity campaigns on behalf of

recruiting encouraged the Navy to establish recruiting publicity bureaus in the major news centers of the United States. Once established, these operations lent themselves admirably to Navy information programs.

In the Taft administration, the lack of a progressive naval policy saw increased appropriations become the target of spoils while necessary overseas base development in support of far-flung responsibilities went wanting -- providing yet another example of the need for a definitive policy backed by public understanding and support.

The administration of President Wilson was not without political objectives. The progress of international events, however, were to frustrate those objectives and precipitate the world into devastating war. To the extent that Wilson's objectives departed from international political reality as seen by military and naval strategists, there was bound to arise a climate of discontent, discouragement and frustration. Within this climate was fostered a greater appreciation on the part of the Navy for the value and importance of public understanding of military and naval policies.

With the United States' entry into the war came the most ambitious program of information and education yet attempted -- the formation of the Committee on

Public Information. The Navy's part in this program was carried by the Navy News Bureau, created especially for the purpose of informing the nation about the details of the naval war efforts. The formalization of that news organization in 1917, established a pattern of operation responsive to the informational needs of the nation. The realization that the policies which dictated this operation represented solely those of the administration caused further evaluation of the utility of such a function during congressional investigations of the Navy Department in 1920.

Following World War I, the United States found itself unable to withdraw from international affairs. Though it remained aloof from membership in the League of Nations, the country still concerned itself with the reestablishment of world order. Popular interest provided the support for peace movements which manifested themselves, in 1922, in the naval Limitation of Arms Conference in Washington. The resultant threat to the maintenance of naval forces felt by naval strategists to be necessary to continued world peace, coupled with the collateral threat posed by the developing technological advances of air power, led naval planners, in 1922, to establish within the Office of Naval Intelligence an information function designed to combat anti-Navy propaganda. Though propaganda was not the problem,

it was the means of appeal for popular support.

In an effort to propagate a greater understanding of the Navy's role in national security affairs, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., proposed, in 1921 and again in 1923, that a special course of instruction for selected members of the press be instituted at the Naval War College. Though restriction in available funds precluded beginning that project, a plan was initiated by Secretary of the Navy Denby to embark editors and publishers in fleet units during portions of the annual fleet training exercises. The first "press cruise" took place in the winter, 1923-24, and the program continued annually thereafter until 1936.

Consolidation of the information function within the Navy Department began in 1922. While Secretary Denby carried on the precedent of conducting the daily press conferences himself, he directed the bureaus and offices of the Navy Department to assist the Information Section of Naval Intelligence by appointing an officer who would have cognizance over informational affairs. He also required that timely information be submitted to the Department as it occurred.

To spread the information network throughout the naval service, Denby, in 1923, emphasized the value of

good press relations and directed all naval district commandants to establish contact with press representatives in their respective areas. Assistance was provided by the Director of Naval Intelligence in the form of guides to press relations, study courses in news handling and materials suitable for public release on the United States and world navies.

In 1926, the first steps were taken to create a Naval Reserve nucleus qualified for special duties in public relations in the event of mobilization for war. Planning for this eventuality continued until implementation in 1940 when carefully selected and specially qualified individuals were asked to come on active duty in the Public Relations Branch of Naval Intelligence, a year prior to the activation of the Naval Reserve.

The popular opinion which had first supported President Wilson in his quest for conciliatory settlements of world disputes, supported, as well, his policies to enter the war to make "the world safe for democracy." In the post-war period, this same opinion turned a deaf ear to preparedness advocates and supported the limitation of arms philosophies of President Harding. Finally, in the administration of President Coolidge, that opinion turned to concern for internal prosperity and development. With peace secured by international agreement, it seemed



to the largest segment of American people that there was little to be concerned over in the state of readiness of their armed forces. Though the Geneva Conference of 1927 ended in failure, preoccupation with internal development remained only slightly broken and was soon reinforced by the Kellogg-Briand peace pact of 1928.

The pacifist policies of President Hoover further kindled the country's hopes for peace and promised to a nation whose economy was deeply depressed, some respite from the burden of defense expenditures.

The agreements of the London Naval Limitation of Arms Conference, in 1930, brought still further hope for the avoidance of a naval race. At the end of the Conference, the United States was still far under the ship tonnages allowed by the agreements and, with the economic situation of the nation in difficulty and considering the political objectives of President Hoover, it was quite likely to remain so.

Meanwhile, the Office of Naval Intelligence, acting through the Secretary of the Navy, continued to refine its information procedures and attempted to further sophisticate its operations throughout the service. Special events such as the demonstration of naval aircraft from the deck of the aircraft carrier Lexington and the touring flight demonstration over the major cities of the northeastern seaboard were staged in

May, less than a month following the agreement in London. While there is nothing written officially which would link the events, it is unlikely that the show was without purpose. Although the London Conference had placed a limit upon aircraft carrier tonnages, it had not been able to reach any agreement on limitation of aircraft.

From the outset, it appeared that the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt would be forced to concern itself with internal development in order to recover from the depression. The tide of international events, however, forced a modification of that thinking as first the Japanese, then the Italians and, finally, the Germans and Russians embarked upon courses of conquest.

The failure of the second London Naval Limitation of Arms Conference in 1935-36 set the stage for world rearmament. In January, 1938, President Roosevelt asked Congress for a \$1 billion naval appropriations bill. The "two-ocean Navy" measure was passed in May over the voices of the pacifists and the United States, belated as usual, found herself with both feet planted in the greatest naval race in history.

The mobilization of public relation activities began in 1940 and continued through to the United States' entry into the war. Utilizing the Naval Reservists who

had been specially selected and trained, or who were otherwise qualified by the nature of their civilian occupations, the Public Relations Branch of Naval Intelligence expanded in less than a year from thirteen personnel to fifty-five by the end of May, 1941. Additional plans had been implemented to create, within the naval districts as well, the nucleus force of qualified Reservists. Public Relation officers had been placed, also, in both the Atlantic and Pacific Fleets commands.

On May 1, 1941, the public affairs function in the Navy became, once again, an independent function responsible directly to the Secretary of the Navy. Later, through the efforts of Admiral Ernest J. King, the office became responsible also to the Chief of Naval Operations.

#### Conclusions

Within the period of this survey, the nature and role of the Armed Forces of the United States have changed: adapted to the shifting requirements of both the society these forces serve and to the political and social institutions they are created to defend.

Throughout this development has run the thread of political consistency. Military power, or the lack of it, is political -- in being as well as in use.

The question of whether to raise and maintain standing armies and navies has not been long a major issue for the people of the United States, but, rather, the degree at which they should be maintained, and at what cost to a democratic society -- that is the question. The answers, such as they are found, form the fabric of our national policy.

From its beginnings, the Navy has sought to gain support for the maintenance of both its efficiency and its combat capability. That role is implicit in the political leadership of the service, in the office of the Secretary of the Navy.

It was within the office of the Secretary, then, that the public affairs function had its natural beginnings. Nor is it surprising to find that the function reached its peaks of refinement under three secretaries who had been newspaper publishers: Gideon Welles, Josephus Daniels and Frank Knox, and in periods of its greatest need: the Civil War, World War I and World War II.

Of cardinal consequence in advancing the development of the function were the extraordinary requirements of naval forces for orderly development -- war was too late. The complex demands of technological progress --

of building ships and training crews to man them -- required both orderly and constant attention. The problem became how to demonstrate the need, how to enunciate the national policy in terms meaningful to the body politic, and how to translate meaning into dollars and cents support.

The needs of the service evolved from the needs of the nation. The requirements of national security policy were translated into terms of funds, men and ships by which that policy could be supported. The multifarious nature of policy determinants involved complex considerations of both national and international interests. Catalysts, events, internal and external rivalries, effects of technology, wants and fears -- operated in both positive and negative ways to hasten or retard policy development. This was the environment in which the public affairs function had to operate.

From its beginning attempts to influence legislators, the public affairs function in the United States Navy proceeded to the time of the Civil War when it shifted its approach to the more mature managerial concept of responsibility to the broad base of political support -- the people themselves. This point marks the beginning of the public affairs function in its

operational sense -- the "turning mark" where the helm was shifted and the course changed.

Throughout its short history, the public affairs function and its development had been characterized by reaction rather than by initiative. Each of the milestones passed came as a result of political or practical problems faced by the Navy. Perhaps this was because the evolution of the function developed along a political model: never had the function known rational progression. Programs were designed to overcome problems of the present; seldom anticipating future evolution. Interpretation of the Navy to the public was the goal -- interpretation of the public to the Navy never envisioned.

Partly this was due to the absolute nature of military operations. Senior officers, knowing they must succeed or fail, survive or perish with available forces on hand in any crisis, found little interest in public hopes for disarmament which, they felt, were unjustified by the international situation. Conflict in interest stood as a bar to mutual understanding. Men who had bled knew that bleeding was less when training and capabilities were greated; that less of the nation's treasure was spent when spent continuously on orderly development rather than in huge crash programs. The concepts were difficult to

convey to a public who saw a chance for a detente, a hope for disarmament and the opportunity to devote their energies to peaceful pursuits. The question of balance and the quest for understanding fostered the growth of the public affairs function.

Competition certainly played its part. Competition for funds; strong interservice rivalries for manpower, monies, and functional assignment; competition against peace groups and advocates of disarmament and with other segments of society striving for public attention and support.

The nature of the society demanded that the public have knowledge enough to provide support in the degree required. But, how much knowledge could be imparted in a free society without endangering fighting ability by informing an enemy? The question of military security and censorship versus freedom of information, too, spurred the development of the public affairs function.

Yet the demands for information to the public had great significance to the vitality of naval policy. In its first public pronouncement, the Navy General Board placed on record its recommendations to the Secretary of the Navy on naval policy. Included as an appendix to the Secretary's annual report in 1913, it addressed the public affairs function:

...In the opinion of the General Board any rational and natural development of the Navy looking to the continuance of peace and the maintenance of our national policies demands the adoption of, and the consistent adherence to, a governmental naval policy founded on our needs and aims. To give life to such a policy requires the support of the people and the Congress; and this support can only be obtained by giving the widest publicity to the policy itself and to the reasons and arguments in its support, and taking the people and the Congress into the full confidence of the Government, inviting intelligent criticism as well as support. The General Board believes that only a lack of understanding...by the people at large prevents the adoption of a consistent naval policy; and recommends to the department a system of extended publicity in all matters relating to naval policy, acting through patriotic organizations, the press, or by whatever means a knowledge of the naval needs of the Nation may be brought home to the people of the country...

Behind that statement lay the most perplexing problem confronting the public affairs function: The basic consideration of responsibility. Did naval policy rest with the Commander-in-Chief, and, thereby, naval public relations policy with it? Or did the public affairs function, as the national security function, have a greater responsibility directly to the people? In questions where the best professional judgment varied with that of the Chief Executive, who should know of it? Who controlled the policy governing public affairs? Why was control necessary? To what purpose was it exercised?



In 1941, the public affairs function in the Navy found itself soon to be responsible to two authorities: the political authority embodied in the Secretary of the Navy, and the military authority vested in the Chief of Naval Operations. Theorists who saw in the function a discharge of basic responsibilities to the people of the nation in keeping them fully informed could afford to disabuse themselves of that nation. The public affairs function had grown from the Navy's requirement to win a broad base of support for its policies.

Looking ahead to the post-war reorganization of the defense establishment and the creation of the Department of Defense in 1948, would serve to highlight the problem. When military objectives were in consonance with political policies, there were few problems for public affairs. When the two courses diverged, however, the concert became cacophony. The problem, in this later period, was transferred up yet another notch in the bureaucracy. With this important exception: the military organization under the Department of Defense had lost its voice.

The organization, in 1941, of the Office of Public Relations was the product of the many forces which had preceded it; had demanded it. It was not enough to realize that, for the Navy, the helm had been put "a'lee," but, further, to consider what course the ship would steer and whose hand was on the helm.

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## APPENDIX A

Excerpts from Commander H. R. Thurber Memo  
to the Director of Naval History; "Navy  
Public Relations, July 1940 - May 1941."

...From July 16, 1940, to 1 May 1941, I was officer in charge of the Public Relations Branch in the Navy Department, and was under the Director of the Office of Naval Intelligence, in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. From 1 May to 27 May 1941, I was attached, as acting director, to the Office of Public Relations, Navy Department, public relations having been transferred as of 1 May from cognizance of the Office of Naval Intelligence to the Office of the Secretary of the Navy...

...When I reported for duty as officer in charge, the Public Relations Branch, Navy Department, was manned by 2 other USN officers who had recently reported, 2 USNR officers, 2 experienced civilian assistants, 4 civilian clerical personnel and 2 enlisted Marines. The branch handled press relations, radio, photographic and other phases of public relations in 3 rooms located between the 8th and 9th wings on the front corridor of the 2nd floor of the Navy Department. The former press section officer remained on board until turnover was completed. Personnel attached were capable, and the branch was operating on principles which had been established over a period of years. Public relations offices in the Naval Districts were, in total, below peacetime operating strength.

The directive issued to me was "to build the office up for an emergency". War plans for such a contingency existed, having been written in 1924 and revised through 1939. Those plans were analyzed, and, after some changes, action was taken on the task assigned.

The first step was that of obtaining additional numbers of experienced personnel. Records of Naval Reserves slated for war-time duty in Navy Public Relations were reviewed and tentative selections made of those who would head the various sections of a war-time Office. There was no legal requirement for these Reserve officers to enter service in 1940; however, selected candidates were interviewed and asked to enter active service provided their personal situation would permit. This procedure was effective, although the time element often appeared protracted as activities expanded and pre-wartime pressure increased.

With additional personnel, and a general speed-up of public relations because of the international situation, it was necessary to obtain larger operating space and in a location that was more accessible to members of the press, radio and photographic services. The entire Navy Department was beginning to expand, but space (7 rooms) was acquired in August 1940, on the first floor, front corridor, next the center (main) entrance to the Navy Department.

Problems of actual public relations were carried forward toward solution, and are discussed under individual headings, in the order: OPR organization, press, radio, pictorial, scripts, civic liaison and naval districts, reference section, voluntary censorship, special projects, comments.

During the period the foregoing were taken in hand, the international situation affecting Navy public relations developed rapidly. The Acting Secretary of the Navy signed in September 1940, contracts for the "\$4,000,000,000 Navy" (200 combatant ships, 2400 airplanes, expansion of the naval shore establishment); fifty over-age U.S. destroyers were given to the British in exchange for the right to lease British naval and air bases in the Western Atlantic; the Selective Service and Training Act was enacted; the export of iron and steel scrap to Japan was prohibited; and Germany, Italy and Japan signed a treaty of alliance which contained a threat against the United States. In January 1941, the President addressed Congress on "the four freedoms", and his budget message requested an additional eleven billion dollars for the national defense program. Repairs to British men-of-war, damaged in the sea war, were undertaken in U.S. naval shipyards. In March 1941, Congress passed the Lend-Lease bill, and the President stated the great task of the day was to "move projects from the assembly lines of our factories to the battle lines of democracy - Now! On May 27, 1941, an unlimited national emergency was declared.

#### OPR ORGANIZATION.

In July 1940, the Navy Department's Public Relations Branch (referred to hereafter as OPR) had an officer in charge (Commander, USN) three officers and an experienced civilian assistant in the press section, and one officer, with an experienced civilian assistant, who handled general information requests, pictorial, radio and such other duties as were assigned.

War plans for OPR called for a Rear Admiral as director, a deputy director, a press section, radio section, photographic (stills) section, Motion picture

section, and general information section. Provisions were made for liaison with Navy public relations branches in the Naval Districts and with Navy public relations representatives afloat.

The mission of OPR, as evolved from U.S. Navy Policy, was to make available to the public through press, radio, pictorial, and other media, all information concerning the Navy that was compatible with military security, in order to keep the people of this country informed of the activities and conditions of the Navy. Decision was made in July 1940 that in order to carry out this mission, OPR's motto should be "service, consistent with security". Because of the international situation and the country's current response to threats against our national security, it was determined that attempts to "sell the Navy" to the country were irrelevant and should be firmly and scrupulously avoided...

To further the accomplishment of OPR's mission, personnel acquired were assigned to carry out functions for which they were judged best-fitted, with the following organization in view:

- a. Director.
- b. Assistant Director.
- c. Administrative Section.
- d. Plans Section.
- e. Press Section.
- f. Radio Section.
- g. Pictorial Section.
- h. Scripts Section.
- i. Civic Liaison and Naval Districts Section.
- j. Reference Section.

By the middle of May 1941, the foregoing organization was operative, although sections were not completely staffed.

During the growth of OPR in the period under review, the undersigned acted as "Director", with the assigned responsibility of enunciating and effectuating approved public relations policies of the Navy. Lieutenant Commander (now Captain) R. W. Berry, USN, acted as "Assistant Director", as well as officer-in-charge of the Press Relations Section until September 1941 when the latter duty was assigned Lieutenant Commander (now Captain) W. H. Wharton, USNR, formerly of the editorial staff of the OREGON JOURNAL and who had reported in for duty in the spring of 1941.

Administrative. Lieutenant (now Captain) H. W.

Gordon, Jr., USN was in charge of the "Administrative Section" throughout, and had numerous additional duties until relieved of them by incoming personnel. The Administrative Section had cognizance of accrediting press, radio, magazine and photographic representatives to the Fleets; of the business management of OPR - personnel, budget, equipment, space, orders, travel; of mail distribution and files; and of the reference library, which eventually became a separate section. Correspondence handled through the Administrative Section during the period under comment totalled 26,533 letters, representing answers to queries for factual information from the press, colleges, schools societies, publishers and individuals, and correspondence initiated by OPR.

In anticipation of the "war" influx of correspondents, writers, radio broadcasters, and photographers into the Fleets, and the attendant administrative and policy details, arrangements were made in April 1941 with the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, to have Lieutenant Commander Waldo F. Drake, USN of the LOS ANGELES TIMES, ordered to PacFt staff as Fleet Public Relations Officer, and with the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, to have Lieutenant Commander (now Commander) Stuyvesant B. Wright, USNR, formerly of PARAMOUNT NEWS, ordered to his staff as Fleet Public Relations officer.

In addition to assistance in the forming of three Fleet units for combat photography, and of the combat artist group the Administrative Section worked with U.S. Marine Corps Representatives in formulating plans for Marine combat correspondents.

Plans. Lieutenant Commander (now Captain) W. M. Galvin, USNR, former Secretary of the Navy League of the United States, was placed in charge of the "Plans Section"<sup>1</sup> on his entry into active service in September 1940, with the responsibility of evaluating and making recommendations on Navy public relations problems. Specific tasks initially assigned were: (1) future organization of Navy public relations ashore and afloat for efficient war service; (2) war liaison of Navy public relations with other current and prospective government public relations activities; (3) constant review and analysis of public reactions to the Navy's activities with a view toward improvement in the Navy's public relations. Task (1) was completed in late

<sup>1</sup>Originally, "Analysis Section"; later "Research Section."

October 1940; task (2) in January 1941; task (3) was immediately operative and was subsequently expanded in February 1941. Lieutenant Commander Galvin's section was increased to five officers by May 1941, and during the interim contributed numerous plans whose implementation will be included hereafter in the outline of activities of other sections.

### PRESS

The Press Relations Section (hereafter referred to as the Press Section) expanded in this period from 3 officers and 1 experienced civilian assistant, to 9 officers and 2 experienced civilian assistants.

Press Section cognizance was as follows:

- a. Preparation and distribution of press releases.
- b. Answering requests from the press, and from individuals with respect to Navy news.
- c. Maintaining close liaison with the press; with press conferences of the President, the Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of War; and with the Navy Department bureaus and offices.

Preparation and distribution of press releases. Preparation of releases was carried out under the supervision of the officer in charge of the Press Section, in consultation with the "Director" whenever matters of policy were involved. During the period covered by this summary, 1644 formal releases were made to the press, varying from 1 to 88 pages. (During the preceding fiscal year, 1216 such releases were made; during the year before that, 900). The number of informal releases of information is indeterminate, but it is estimated to have increased during the period covered in about the same ratio as the formal releases. Distribution of each formal release was made within the Navy Department press room and at the National Press Club. No mailing list was maintained.

Answering Requests. In accordance with tradition, the officer in charge of the Press Section was "on call" for 24 hours each day. As additional personnel reported and were given a familiarization course, a system of "watch officers" was inaugurated in order to provide answers to queries which were increasing materially as international tension mounted. In November 1940, a 16-hour Press Section watch was set; and in May 1941, a 24-hour watch was activated.



Liaison. The move of OPR to new quarters in August 1940 permitted of increased facilities for representatives of the press associations and large daily newspapers having Washington bureaus. This closer liaison provided for more accurate reporting of Navy news, and for correcting misstatements or inaccurate statements concerning the Navy.

The "Director", OPR, maintained close liaison with the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations, and delegated this responsibility when necessary. The officer in charge of the Press Section arranged for regular conferences of the Secretary of the Navy with the press, briefed the Secretary in advance, and arranged for record and distribution of his remarks. The officer in charge of the Press Section attended press conferences of the President, and a Press Section representative attended press conferences of the Secretary of War.

Commencing in August 1940, the undersigned directed that closer contacts be established with the bureaus and offices of the Navy Department. The Press Section was able, as personnel increased, to carry out this directive by creating "teams" to develop newsworthy details hitherto dormant.

Navy Radio News. In December 1940, the Press Section commenced issuing Navy Radio News to the Fleet and outlying stations. The United Press had been supplying a news digest to the Navy Department (Communication Watch Officer) for dissemination to the Fleet, but in October 1940, expressed a desire to terminate this service at the Navy's earliest convenience. Negotiations conducted by the undersigned resulted in having this digest continued, in modified form, and supplied to the "first watch" officer in the Press Section. Here it was further edited and augmented with news of particular Navy interest, for radio transmission to the Navy. This improved service met a long-felt desire for last-minute news to the Fleet and outlying stations.

## RADIO

The Radio Section of OPR was not formalized until February 1941. Lieutenant Commander N. W. Sharpe, USNR, (former independent radio consultant) who had been performing the functions of officer in charge of the Navy's radio public relations while still attached to the Press Section, was named as head of the Radio Section in a new OPR organizational paper, and was assigned an assistant. (In June, two additional assistants reported to this Section.)

The Radio Section had cognizance of arrangements for Navy participation in national broadcast programs, of answering queries from radio news broadcasters, of assistance in script preparation for addresses by naval personnel, and of liaison with commercial broadcasts.

Arrangements for the Navy's participation in national broadcast programs included those necessary for 16 addresses by the Secretary of the Navy, 2 by the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 5 by the Chief of Naval Operations, and 23 by various high-ranking officers; for 19 national news events, such as the ceremonies attendant upon launching of major naval vessels; for Navy Day programs; for Christmas Day programs; for 38 nationwide recruiting programs; and for consideration of numerous, varied requests from national broadcasting companies.

National radio news broadcasters received much of their assistance from the Press Section but there were numerous calls on the Radio Section for additional, "background" material.

While script preparation was not visualized as a permanent function of the Radio Section, nevertheless much of this was carried out as a service, particularly in the 1940-41 recruiting programs, in which OPR assistance was requested by the Navy Department's Director of Recruiting. Script preparation included 11 addresses on recruiting for particular phases of the Navy's needs, and 293 recruiting "tag-lines" for nationally-known entertainment leaders and national news commentators, all of whom requested this as a privilege.

Liaison with commercial entertainment broadcast (advertising) programs was a problem which was met by a directive, drafted by the officer in charge of radio relations, and signed by the Chief of Naval Operations in December 1940. This permitted commercial entertainment broadcasts afloat and ashore, provided the Navy were not directly identified with the product advertised, and further, that each broadcast would include a statement to the effect that the program had been staged for the entertainment of naval personnel concerned and did not constitute an endorsement by the Navy of the product advertised.

During this period, preliminary arrangements were started (in January 1941) on the request of a national broadcasting company, for short-wave radio broadcasts of entertainment and morale value to the Navy overseas. Negotiations were not completed at this time, but

security and communications problems for these broadcasts were solved and the project was in readiness for future, war use.

The Radio Section entered into the Navy's educational campaign on voluntary censorship, and by participation in three major panel discussions assisted in arriving at a satisfactory understanding between the Navy Department and the broadcasting companies of the security problems involved.

As a result of its monitoring of broadcasts, the Radio Section recommended in May 1941, that Japanese language broadcasts from Hawaii be eliminated. This recommendation was translated into a draft letter, subsequently sent by the Chief of Naval Operations to the Commandant Fourteenth Naval District.

### PICTORIAL

The Pictorial Section of OPR was established in December 1940 under Lieutenant Commander (now Captain) E. John Long, USNR, formerly on the executive staff of the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE. Cognizance of this new section was assigned as follows: still photographs - news, features and advertising; motion pictures - news, feature shorts and productions; artists - arrangements and display; posters. These responsibilities previously had been assigned various members of OPR staff, who continued to assist Lieutenant Commander Long until additional personnel reported for duty. By May 1941, there were three officer assistants, an experienced civilian assistant and two clerical personnel in this Section.

Still photographs. Prior to December 1940, the growing number of requests for Navy "still" photographic material had placed a heavy load on an understaffed OPR<sup>2</sup>. Problems of procurement, laboratory processing, editing, clearing for security, and ready availability had been analyzed, but progress in solving these was slow. In December 1940, the Navy was issuing, on request, about 7,000 still photographs a year. Commencing in January 1941, as a result of more expeditious clearance arrangements with the Department's security agency, official

<sup>2</sup>As an example of the work involved in meeting requests for pictorial cooperation, over 1500 photos, together with script captions and layouts were reviewed, for the "Navy Day Issue" (October 1940) of LIFE Magazine, which had resulted from negotiations between LIFE editors and the undersigned in early August.

Navy photographs were displayed in the Press section in connection with news releases, and more rapid cooperation was made possible in supplying photographs requested by pictorial magazines and newspaper rotogravure sections. Twenty-two pictorial Navy features of large scope were requested by leading magazines, and over four hundred Navy photographs were used in rotogravure sections during the period of this report. In the advertising field, numerous requests from 21 national advertising agencies were met by assistance in reviewing layouts, copy, photographs, and furnishing material and photographs for nationwide advertisements having the Navy as the main background. In May 1941, by improving the quality and variety of naval photographs and the production line, the Pictorial Section was issuing approximately 1,000 still photographs a day.

Motion Pictures. Arrangements were made with motion picture news reel companies during the period under review for coverage, on their request, and for security clearance, of 46 Navy news events of national interest. Cooperation was extended five major motion picture companies for feature shorts of 22 Navy subjects which were requested and were subsequently cleared by the Department's security agency. Arrangements were made with news reel companies for film and editing in the make-up of a new and up-to-date recruiting film, entitled "The Battle". OPR cooperated in the review and scripts of 13 major motion picture productions, of which 10 were cleared, as suitable, and 3 rejected. Close relationships were maintained with the "Hays Organization", which resulted (March 1941), in holding up shipments to the Japanese government of news reels showing U.S. Navy activities; in the forming of Naval Reserve units of camera men and technicians for research, and of three Fleet units for combat photography; in assistance to naval recruiting; and in supplying naval subjects for motion pictures to be distributed in Latin America for furthering the "good-neighbor" policy.

Artists. Prior to establishment of the Pictorial Section, foundations were laid by the undersigned for an art project as a phase of the Navy's public relations... A number of artists, etchers, and illustrators were interviewed, and arrangements inaugurated to start the shore phase. Mr. Vernon Howe Bailey, an eminent etcher and water color artist, was obtained through financial contract with the Bureau of Ships, and was started in the spring of 1941 on a comprehensive record of ship-building which subsequently had been partially displayed in art exhibits throughout the country, and reproduced in magazines and in rotogravure sections of metropolitan

newspapers. In March 1941, Mr. Griffith Baily Coale, president of the National Society of Mural Painters, was selected as the prospective officer in charge of a group of naval artists. Commander Coale's work as a combat artist and a writer, his cooperation in obtaining other outstanding naval combat artists, and his enthusiastic leadership in this field are too well-known to be repeated in this commentary. Eventually, under Lieutenant Commander Long's later guidance, an experienced "curator" served during the War to correlate the many phases of this activity. This art project will have a lasting value in the Navy's public relations.

Posters. In pursuance of requests from lithographing firms and from the (President's) Office of Facts and Figures, the Pictorial Section cooperated in supplying Navy material for Navy recruiting posters, for "spy" posters being prepared by the Society of Illustrators, and for the THINKAMERICAN series of posters.

Correlation of photographic activities. As a result of the increased demand for Navy still photographs and motion pictures during the emergency period, the photographic facilities available to OPR became seriously overtaxed by the spring of 1941. A study of laboratory facilities available led to the submission of a memorandum by OPR, embodying specific suggestions for revision and improvement of the entire framework of Navy photography. As a result of this memorandum, the Secretary of the Navy convened a Photographic Board. The report of this board, on which OPR was represented by Lieutenant Commander Long, set forth principles that guided official Navy photography throughout World War II.

Following the submission of a memorandum from OPR in the spring of 1941, a board was convened to revise General Order Number 96, which governed the taking and publication of photographs of naval subjects for publication. General Order No. 179 resulted, and gave a workable solution for this subject during World War II.

### SCRIPTS.

The Scripts Section was formed in August 1940 under Lieutenant (jg) (now Captain) Victor F. Blakeslee, USN (Ret.), a capable writer, and was assigned cognizance of:

a. Preparation of addresses for the Secretary of the Navy, the Under-secretary of the Navy, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and for high-ranking naval officers.

b. Preparation of "ceremonial" statements for the Secretary of the Navy;

c. Assistance to writers and publishers in preparation of books, magazine articles and pamphlets.

Scripts preparation and assistance for addresses totalled 31 during the period under review, the addresses varying in length from fifteen to forty-five minutes' delivery time.

"Ceremonial statements" prepared by the Scripts Section numbered 92, and included such subjects as Alnavs for the centenary observance of Admiral Mahan's birth<sup>3</sup>, for Navy Day, for Thanksgiving, for Christmas, for Army Day, for the founding of the Marine Corps; congratulatory messages to national patriotic organizations; Chief of Naval Operations' messages to the commanding officers of naval ships being newly commissioned.

Assistance to writers and publishers imposed an increasing challenge to the resourcefulness of the Scripts Section. In the book field, the manuscripts of 24 authors were reviewed, and suggestions for additional material or changes were accepted by the authors. In the magazine field, aid was given to LIFE for eight major articles on the Navy; to FORTUNE for three Navy studies; to the SATURDAY EVENING POST for four expository articles on the Navy<sup>4</sup>; to the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE for four illustrated Navy articles; to COLLIER'S, COSMOPOLITAN, AMERICAN, LOOK, POPULAR SCIENCE MONTHLY, ARCHITECTURAL FORUM, MACHINERY, THIS WEEK, AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL, ARMY ORDNANCE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL, for feature Navy articles in their field; to Nelson Rockefeller (Coordinator for Commercial and Cultural Relations Between the American Republics) in illustrated magazine publications for circulation in Latin America.

<sup>3</sup>In connection with the Mahan centenary, OPR prepared a suitable ceremonial message for press release by the President, made arrangements for a wreath-laying ritual at Mahan's grave, and aided the Naval War College in observance of the day.

<sup>4</sup>One of these, "Ships, Men - and Bases" by the Secretary of the Navy (with Fletcher Pratt) was reprinted free-of-charge by the POST publishers in pamphlet (color illustrated) form, and 20,000 copies distributed "for the Navy Department in the interest of National Defense".

Pamphlet assistance included preparation for the Chairman of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee of an illustrated booklet (Senate Document No. 53) on "The United States Navy", for congressional distribution; preparation for the American Council on Public Affairs of "The United States Navy in National Defense" by Frank Knox, Secretary of the Navy, for a nationwide sale; review of four major pamphlet studies on the national defense by the Foreign Policy Association; review of material submitted by the Navy League of the United States.

#### CIVIC LIAISON AND NAVAL DISTRICTS SECTION.

This Section was not formalized until late in February 1941, and was then placed in charge of Lieutenant Commander (now Captain) James G. Stahlman, USNR, owner and publisher of the NASHVILLE BANNER, who had volunteered to the Secretary of the Navy in January for Navy public relations duty. Prior to the establishment of this Section, its functions were carried on by the Administrative Section.

Cognizance of the Civic Liaison and Naval Districts Section<sup>5</sup> included liaison with Public Relations Officers in the Naval Districts, and cooperation with welfare, patriotic, civic, fraternal, educational, entertainment (USO) and other civilian organizations (decentralizing to Districts whenever feasible).

...In February, 1941, Lieutenant Commander Stahlman was sent on a tour of the Districts to investigate problems of the public relations officers. As a result of this tour, closer liaison procedure was established and a directive was signed by the Chief of Naval Operations for further increases in Districts' public relations personnel. A "Guide to Navy Public Relations", initiated by the undersigned, was prepared by the Section, and issued in March, 1941, to the Naval Districts by the Chief of Naval Operations<sup>6</sup>. A further letter<sup>7</sup> was prepared by the Section, at the direction of the undersigned, and issued to the naval service by the Chief of Naval Operations in March 1941, for guidance in connection with the Navy's campaign for voluntary censorship. Plans were formulated in May for a conference of public relations officers from the Naval Districts in Washington in the summer of 1941.

<sup>5</sup>Later changed to the Naval District Section.

<sup>6</sup>CNC Serial 380616 of March 19, 1941.

<sup>7</sup>CNC Serial 247216 of March 17, 1941.

Civic Liaison. Requests of national civic groups<sup>8</sup> on OPR for speakers, Navy exhibits and naval participation in celebrations were originally handled by the Administrative Section, decentralized wherever possible to the Public Relations Officers of the Naval Districts. This function was gradually taken over by the Civic Liaison and Naval Districts Section, and further decentralized to the Districts.

#### REFERENCE SECTION.

The Reference Section was established February 1, 1941, under the supervision of Miss Helene Philibert, with experience of over twenty years in the Navy Department's Press Section. Miss Estelle Philibert, a capable statistician, was enrolled as assistant. Inspection was made of the systems in the New York Public Library (government publication section), and the libraries and "morgues" of the Associated Press and the New York Herald Tribune.

In late February, organization was started of reference material hitherto accumulated by the Press and other Sections. Binding, arranging, and indexing of press releases (from July 1919 to date), assembly and indexing of Congressional hearings and bills on the Navy, indexing digests of Navy contracts, consolidation and indexing of biographical material, binding and arrangement of histories of all U.S. Navy ships and air squadrons, and assembly of authoritative Navy historical reference material continued with commendable speed and efficiency. By May 1941, the Reference Section not only had been able to meet the numerous demands of other OPR Sections, but also had assisted materially in supplying a remarkable volume of source material requested by other bureaus and offices of the Navy Department.

#### VOLUNTARY CENSORSHIP.

The international situation affecting Navy public relations developed...(sentence obscured)...military value to the Axis powers was unrestricted, except for that issued by the Navy Department. I discussed this problem with the Director of Naval Intelligence and recommended that a letter be sent by Secretary Knox to

<sup>8</sup>The Navy League of the United States was lacking in active leadership and finances in 1940, but commencing early in 1941, under the presidency of the Honorable Sheldon Clark, assumed a positive role in supporting a national information program on the Navy.



all U.S. press, magazine, radio and photographic agencies requesting their voluntary cooperation in the avoidance of publicity - unless announced or authorized by the Navy Department - on certain subjects. This recommendation was based on the following factors:

a. Agreement in Joint Army and Navy Board reports dating back to 1937, that censorship of these agencies in time of war should be limited at least initially, to voluntary, self-imposed censorship.

b. The probability that the U.S. would be totally embroiled in World War II, and allied with the British.

c. The fact that in World War I, a "list" or code for specific guidance in voluntary censorship had not been available until seven weeks after hostilities began.

d. The thought that an educational period in voluntary censorship would be mutually beneficial to the agencies concerned and the Navy.

As a result of this recommendation and further discussions of a draft prepared by the undersigned, Secretary Knox sent the following confidential letter to over 3,200 agencies:

"December 31, 1940

"Dear

"As the present emergency has become more critical, many news, magazine, radio and photographic agencies have requested me to advise them as to the manner in which they can make their services more helpful to the Navy. This cooperative attitude is much appreciated.

"Speaking not only as Secretary of the Navy but also as a former newspaper publisher, I believe that if further assistance is requested of publishing agencies in the interests of national defense, it will be gladly extended.

At the moment, the Navy finds itself seriously hampered in the proper conduct of its preparations for the present emergency because of dissemination to the public - and thereby to unfriendly powers - of certain details concerning these preparations.

"Your cooperation, therefore, is requested after January 15, 1941 in avoidance of publicity -- unless announced or authorized by the Navy Department -- on the following subjects:

- "(1) Actual or intended movements of vessels or aircraft of the U.S. Navy, of units of naval enlisted personnel or divisions of mobilized reserves, or troop movements of the U.S. Marine Corps:
- "(2) (Mention of) "Secret" technical U.S. naval weapons or development thereof:
- "(3) New U.S. Navy ships or aircraft;
- "(4) U.S. Navy construction projects ashore.

"In making this request, I wish to assure you that the Navy Department will continue to release information concerning the foregoing subjects to an extent that is consonant with public interest and with the effectiveness of the Navy's preparations.

"A similar confidential letter is being sent simultaneously to all the listed American press, magazine, radio and photographic agencies.

Sincerely,

/s/ FRANK KNOX  
Secretary of the Navy"

Replies to this letter were practically 100 per cent in acceptance. There were natural questions arising from such a proposal: e.g. - Would there be similar "lists" from other government departments? Would there be some Navy agency available for rapid decisions on clearance for news material of questionable security? Would the Navy's "list" be changed, or eventually made more specific? The National Press Club, in Washington, undertook to approach these problems by arranging an "off-the-record" forum on press censorship, 14 March 1941, to which Mr. Lowell Mellett (President's Office of Facts and Figures), Major General Robert C. Richardson, Jr. (Director of Public Relations, War Department) and the undersigned were invited in order to answer questions proposed by leading journalists and publishers. Transcriptions of this (and a second) forum were sent by the National Press Club to all publishing media in the U.S. for information, but not for publication.

On 17 March, 1941, the Chief of Naval Operations, in furtherance of the voluntary censorship campaign, issued a letter to the Naval Service<sup>9</sup> amplifying the intent of voluntary censorship, attaching a digest of existing security regulations, and applying interpretations in clarification of the Navy's public relations policy: "To keep the public informed of the activities of the Navy, as compatible with military security."

The undersigned subsequently was designated to follow up on this campaign: at the second Forum of the National Press Club, 10 April 1941, in an address before the annual convention of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Washington, D.C. 18 April 1941; in a national radio forum with three prominent New York editors on CBS "People's Platform", New York City, 19 April 1941; in an address at the annual convention of the National Association of Broadcasters, St. Louis, Mo., 13 May 1941; in a panel discussion (again with Mr. Mellett and Major Gen. Richardson) for Mid-Western editors at the University of Missouri, 14 May 1941; and by addresses at numerous other, less formal meetings.

The foregoing steps, supplemented by considerable correspondence and by discussions in U.S. trade journals of the publishing world, did not entirely solve the many problems of voluntary censorship. There were lapses and errors in judgement, not all of which were on the part of the press or due to the voluntary system. However in the May 3, 1941 issue of EDITOR & PUBLISHER, the leading article, which was on Voluntary Censorship, noted that:

"In both the Navy and War Departments, newspapermen assigned to coverage say access is not as free today as it was a few months ago; yet it is agreed that the news product is greater - more releases are issued daily and press conferences are conducted with greater regularity than in the past...Commander Thurber describes it as 'more constructive coverage, with emphasis on news which does not run head-on into the categories suggested by Secretary Knox'...Cited as evidence that voluntary censorship is workable both branches of the service report an almost universal practice of submitting questionable news for clearance before publication."

And in the SATURDAY EVENING POST of 26 September, 1942, the following conclusion was reached in an article on "Now Your News is Censored":

<sup>9</sup> CNO Serial 247216, prepared by OPR.

"Pearl Harbor had caught neither the military nor the American press with its guard down, so far as censorship was concerned. For more than ten months before that fateful Sunday a full-dress rehearsal of censorship had been carried on. Although bearing the title of 'voluntary co-operation', it actually amounted to a wartime censorship on naval matters...It managed to conceal an extremely important movement of the fleet at one stage; it put our building program into the mystery category; and it allowed the establishment of outposts at remote spots that have never been revealed to this day...

"Whatever its merit or fallacy, Knox's 'voluntary co-operation' did help train the American newspaper editor to police himself and his works, and to recognize the difference between news that would give 'aid and comfort to the enemy' and news that wouldn't. When (Byron) Price took over the reins of censorship in December, not only did the newspapers and radio have the benefit of this experience but they had been voluntarily operating for the two weeks after Pearl Harbor under a military censorship put into effect by the Army and Navy."

### SPECIAL PROJECTS.

#### Navy Day, 1940.

The officer in charge of the Administrative Section of OPR branch was secretary of the Navy Department Navy Day Committee. Ground work for the celebration was started in July, in compliance with detailed requests from the Navy League, the Naval Reserve and patriotic organizations.

The slogan for Navy Day, 1940 was "KEEP THE NAVY STRONG". Eleven articles and speeches on the subject of the "Two-Ocean Fleet", and similar appropriate material were distributed to the Naval Service as basic material for press and speeches on Navy Day...

...Cooperation was extended in securing speakers at Navy Day events under the auspices of Naval Reserve organizations, American Legion, Military Order World War and other patriotic organizations, as well as city and state committees. The Maryland Navy Day committee and the Propeller Club of Baltimore sponsored the Navy Day banquet at which Admiral H. R. Stark, Chief of Naval Operations was principal speaker. Other programs of interest were held in the principal large cities.

One of the events of Navy Day which created wide interest was the unveiling of a bronze plaque in honor of William Chauvenet, co-founder of the Naval Academy at Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri.

Industrial Mobilization. Acting upon a suggestion from the late Lieutenant Commander Leslie P. Jacobs, USNR, who entered OPR service in March 1941, letters were prepared for signature of the Chief of Naval Operations and sent in April 1941 to the Commandants of Naval Districts in the United States, directing that arrangements be made for addresses by notable Navy personnel at private industrial plants holding Navy contracts. Lieutenant Commander Jacobs also suggested the awarding of "E"s for excellence of production, an idea which was formalized later under the Industrial Incentive Division, of OOR.

Liaison with Bureau of Public Relations, War Department. Close liaison was maintained with the public relations personnel assigned the War Department. With the reporting in February 1941, of Major General Robert C. Richardson, Jr., as Director of Public Relations, War Department, interchange of ideas increased. The personality and ability of that officer added greatly to the voluntary censorship campaign initiated by the Navy, and rapidly furthered by the Army. In the establishment of this pleasant liaison, there were many benefits that became evident when service public relations came under the test of war conditions.

Security. The growth of Navy public relations during the period under review added to the volume of work placed on the Security Branch, Office of Naval Intelligence, which was responsible, among other duties, for security clearance of all OPR projects. This branch was conveniently located adjacent to OPR and was in charge of Commander (now Captain) J. S. Phillips, USN, with Lieutenant Commander (now Captain) E.S. Barnhardt, USN (Ret), as his deputy. Cooperation of these officers in timely clearance was outstanding, and their suggestions for time-saving methods were invaluable as the workload on OPR increased.

#### COMMENTS.

Certain organizational and administrative problems for future planning of Navy public relations are evident from the preceding summary. Three are noted briefly.

a. Training. A school, or course, is recommended for public relations personnel, the curriculum to include

instruction in selected aspects of the art of public relations, the Navy's organization, the Navy's policy, and naval strategy and tactics. Arrangements for attendance of Naval Reserve personnel who are scheduled for public relations duty at the "naval phases" of such a school, and for sending this personnel on Fleet maneuvers, is recommended.

b. Public Media. An OPR program for forum discussions on Navy public relations problems with representatives of the public media is recommended, subjects for discussion to include those necessary for familiarization of representatives of the press, radio, photographic magazine and other public media with the Navy's organization and policy, with the current operating Navy, and with naval strategy and tactics.

c. Security. The mission of Navy public relations - to keep the public informed of the activities of the Navy, as compatible with military security - raises many thorny problems of security in peacetime, and (under voluntary censorship) in wartime. A "code" is suggested for guidance not only of the Navy, but also of the public media - this "code" to be issued to the Navy, and to be included in forum discussions noted in b, preceding. Emphasis on wartime security is requisite. An approach to this latter problem is suggested in order to increase understanding and responsibility; namely, to study available enemy estimates of U.S. losses each action of World War II, with a view to arriving at an approximate "code" of what can and can't be released from a standpoint of security, this "code" and the study from which it resulted to be supplied the Navy and the public media as noted above.

In concluding this summary, the undersigned again desires to pay tribute to his hard-working, effective associates who produced, and who gave Navy public relations a good name in and outside the service during the period under review, and in addition established a sound nucleus for the subsequent, wartime expansion of personnel.

H. R. THURBER.

O in C	Commander H. R. Thurber, USN Secretary - Mrs. Katherine Womack
Asst. Director	Lt. Comdr. R.W. Berry, USN Secretary - Mrs. Mildred Fussell
Administrative Section	Lt. H.W. Gordon, Jr., USN Secretary-Miss Shirley Hoffman Orderlies Sgt. R. W. Hines, USMC Pfc. Norman T. Hatch, USMC Pvt. Edward Murphy, USMC Messengers Mr. Robert Brouillette Mr. Louis Sutter Switchboard Operator Mr. Clayton Holt
Plans Section	Lieut. Comdr. W. M. Galvin, USNR Secretary-Miss Lena Edwards Lieut. Comdr. L.P. Jacobs, USNR Lieut. Comdr. E.W. Jenson, USNR Lieut. H.R. Awtrey, USNR Ens. A.N. Welles, USNR
Press Section	Lieut. Comdr. R.W. Berry, USN Secretary-Mrs. Mildred Fussell Lieut. Comdr. W.S. Wharton, USNR Lieut. T. Krum, USNR Lieut. (jg) F.B. George, USNR Lieut. (jg) A.A. Allen, USNR Ens. A.G. Newmyer, USNR Ens. W.S. Dooley, USNR Ens. A.A. Hoehling, USNR Chief Printer L.E. Ruggles, USN(Ret.) Mrs. Louise Daniels Clerical: Miss Helen Harvey Y1c Thomas M. Hopwood Y3c Wade Sherier Y3c David Holman
Radio Section	Lieut. Comdr. N.W. Sharpe, USNR Secretary-Miss Louise Baumann Lieut. J. K. Jones, USNR
Pictorial Section	Lieut. Comdr. E. J. Long, USNR Secretary-Miss Theresa Hasson Lieut. Comdr. S.B. Wright, USNR (Detached to FPRO, US Atlantic Fleet in May) Lieut. G. W. Goman, USNR Lieut. (jg) R.C. Whitman, USNR Miss Alice M. Costello Clerical: Miss Helen Hartl

Scripts Section	Lieut.(jg) V.F. Blakeslee, USN(Ret) Secretary-Miss Iris Caffee Lieut.(jg) H. Howe, USNR
Civic Liaison and Naval Districts Section	Lieut.Comdr. J.G. Stahlman, USNR Secretary-Miss Jo Anne Scheier
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Yeomen	3	2
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HELM'S A'LEE  
HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS FUNCTION  
IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY,  
1861-1941

by  
F. Donald Scovel

A Thesis in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS  
(Journalism)

at the

University of Wisconsin  
1968

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"It is known among the military, but less widely among the general public, that the object of war is determined by policy; that policy in turn is determined by statesmen, and that these statesmen are strongly influenced by public opinion. But it has not been generally appreciated that for this reason public opinion may give to strategy its initial direction and may color and even decisively influence the outcome of a war."

... J. M. Scammell

## Preface

Little admitted, seldom supported, and rarely recognized for what it was, the United States Navy's adoption of a formal public affairs function followed a stormy evolution. Participation in international expositions, publicity campaigns on behalf of recruiting, cooperation with the Navy League of the United States -- all played a part of in its development. Despite popular misconception, the public affairs function did not grow, nor was it fostered, in a vacuum. It evolved because of the social and political forces which demanded a responsive and responsible voice in government.

In any assessment of a nation's power, it is essential to begin with the temper, the will of her people. Military and naval forces form but an extension of that will, which, in operation, constitutes national purpose and dictates national policy.

Factors which influence that will, then, are of great importance in determinations of national power. In this nether land of the indefinable, it is known that events and their perception are primary considerations affecting popular thought and action. It is in this influence on public opinion that the public affairs function in government, and in the United States Navy, has its greatest meaning.

In the history of the development of the public affairs function in the United States Navy, the "turning mark" at which the Navy shifted its course from early attempts to influence legislators to the mature concept of direct responsibility to the nation and the people came in the Civil War. It was here that, in the jargon of the sailing ships, "the helm was put a'lee."

While there is a wealth of literature written on naval subjects, there is a dearth of it dealing, even tangentially, with the subject of public affairs in the United States Navy. Even such an outstanding volume as Rear Admiral Julius A. Furer's, Administration of the Navy Department in World War II, contains but a paragraph, in 950 pages of text, touching on the Office of Public Relations.

The objective of this study has been to document the development of the public affairs function in the United States Navy from its earliest traceable beginnings. In setting the boundaries of this study, primarily it was necessary to consider aspects directly affecting the development of the public affairs function while noting other aspects of lesser bearing such as Navy actions with, and reactions to the mass communications media. Insofar as these operations were found to have exercised influence on the functional development of

public affairs in the United States Navy, they have been included. Also included in the same sense of relevance to this development was the tide of public opinion, reflected by the media and in Congress, and the movements which set political forces in motion -- the preparedness movement of 1915-16, and the peace movement in the years, 1922-1928.

Events were significant in the development of the public affairs function in the period under study. The Washington Naval Limitation of Arms Conference, 1921-22, and the bombing tests upon Navy ships conducted by General Billy Mitchell and a group of Army and Navy fliers, for instance, were events which led the Navy to establish an information function within the Office of Naval Intelligence in order to mount a counter-propaganda offensive. Events, too, by which the need for a strong Navy could be dramatized were pertinent to the functional development of public affairs activities: the threats of the commerce raiders in the Civil War and those of the German submarines in World War I, and the cruise of the battleship fleet around the world, 1907-9.

Executive leadership by the President and support either offered or withheld by Congress, too, had deep implications for Navy public affairs operations throughout this study.

Interservice rivalries too had continuous effects.



Because of their nature, however, little has been written which would establish a link between interservice actions and reactions, and the influence of this stimulus remains obscure.

There were many such areas of obscurity in dealing with such a politically oriented investigation: the role of the Secretaries of the Navy in their private meetings with individuals of the press and with officials of the Navy League; the influence of the President upon service actions carried by the Secretary of the Navy from decisions made in Cabinet meetings; the relationships between the Secretaries and the Committees of Congress; the role of patronage, and the influence of spoils, and the relationships of Navy public affairs with the Committee on Public Information in World War I and, later, with the Office of War Information in World War II -- all remained outside the area of documentation.

Also of importance to this study were the roles played by individuals such as John W. Jenkins, the first manager of the Navy News Bureau. Though Jenkins conducted the day-to-day work of operating the Bureau, the policy decisions of what was released to the public and the manner and language of the releases seems to have been provided by Josephus Daniels himself. No documentation establishing the true relationship between the two was

discovered and the activities of Jenkins remained obscure.

The parameters of this study suggested many other areas of interest and pertinence which justified investigation. Among these were: a study of the public affairs activities of Gideon Welles, and those of Josephus Daniels and Frank Knox, all of whom were former publishers who made significant contributions to the public affairs function in critical periods of the Navy's history; a study of the preparedness movement of 1915-16; and a study of Navy participation in exhibits, expositions and in international fleet reviews. Following 1941 were yet other subjects: the operations of the Office of Public Relations, whose beginnings were set in the period of this current study; the combat art program; and a survey of the censorship function in periods of national tension. These were but a few of the many parts of the total picture concerning public affairs in the United States Navy. The end point of the study was set at the establishment of the Office of Public Relations in May, 1941, whose subsequent operations were a part of the history of World War II.

The methodology of this study centered upon a research plan which focused on two areas of primary-source interest: the records of the Office of the Secretary of the Navy, National Archives, and the Navy Department records maintained by the Division of Naval

Histories, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department. Additional material was sought in the files of the Bureau of Navigation, National Archives. The research in Washington was conducted in two ten-day periods during the summer, 1967.

The guide to research used in the period to 1918 was Harold and Margaret Sprout's, The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776-1918. Without its superb documentation the project would have been infinitely more difficult since few, if any, records predating 1900 carry indexes which reveal the slightest trace of public affairs activity. Indeed, the whole problem of research through primary-source documents has been the difficulty in dealing with great volumes of letter press, typewritten and manuscript materials to which no index in the area of public affairs has been compiled.

The task would have proven impossible without the continued interest and active support of many who are fully qualified to call themselves historians. To each of them, and for whatever this study is worth, I owe a great debt. In guiding my first halting probes in shoal waters I must thank Admiral E. M. Eller, Director of Naval Histories Division, Navy Department, himself a former Chief of Information; his personal secretary, Miss T. I. Mertz, whose knowledge of the

intricacies of naval histories has never ceased to amaze me, whose sailing directions have caused me to avoid innumerable uncharted reefs, and whose patience has never worn thin despite any number of distress calls spread throughout a year of research; the staff in the Navy Department Library led by Mr. F. S. Meigs, and also the staff of the Operational Histories Division.

Thanks, as well, are due and tendered to the staff of the National Archives, especially to Mr. Harry Swartz who spent unnumbered hours in obtaining the unobtainable and Mr. Lee Saegesser who pointed to channels through the shoals.

To a special group of individuals whose personal experiences with the Office of Public Relations and its predecessors, the Public Relations Branch and the Information Section of the Office of Naval Intelligence, contributed immensely to my understanding: Admiral (retired) Bernard L. Austin, Admiral (retired) John B. Heffernan, Miss Helen Philibert and Admirals Leland P. Lovette and H. R. Thurber, both of whom passed away before the research project could be completed; my sincerest appreciation.

Debts of gratitude must also be accorded to Captain R. S. Jones, who got the project rolling on Navy tracks; Captain Pickett Lumpkin, Captain Edmund L. Castillo, and Captain William Thompson who contributed

generously of both their time and understanding of the development of the public affairs function.

Special thanks are due, too, to the thesis committee who gave more than a full measure of patience, guidance and understanding: Professors Scott Cutlip, Richard Joel and James Fosdick.

To my family, my deepest appreciation. It was they who bore the burden...

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## CHAPTER I

The Beginnings of Public Affairs  
In the United States Navy:  
The Civil War and Beyond

## CHAPTER I

The history of Public Relations in the United States Navy follows closely the evolution of the function within government. In the creation of the United States Navy itself can be seen the marshaling of political support by the expedient of spreading the contracts for goods and services over as large an area and among as many individuals and companies as possible.<sup>1</sup> The manner of obtaining the needed support caused the naval historians, Harold and Margaret Sprout, to conclude, "...it would seem a fair inference, from official utterances as well as from circumstantial evidence, that the Administration aimed to popularize the Navy in a sufficient number of states and communities, to insure legislation continuing it on a permanent basis."<sup>2</sup>

Of more marked influence upon public and Congressional opinion, however, was the press of international events. The depredations of the Barbary Corsairs and actions of the French privateers which later erupted into the Quasi-Naval War with France combined to give proponents of an effective naval force leverage enough to enact the hotly debated Navy Act of May 27, 1794, establishing the United States Navy.<sup>3</sup>

With the election of Thomas Jefferson and the triumph of the Jeffersonian Republican party came a drastic change in naval strategy--a period of retrenchment and passive



coast defense.<sup>4</sup> The cutback was in marked contrast to the active building program espoused by the Navy's first Secretary, Benjamin Stoddert<sup>5</sup> and occurred in the critical period preceding the War of 1812.

Failure of the Jeffersonian naval strategy was punctuated by the nearly complete blockade of coast of the United States from Long Island Sound to New Orleans. The futility of the gunboat defense policy and the bankruptcy of a militia system for national defense was demonstrated to the American public in the burning of Washington.<sup>6</sup>

The function of Public Relations in the United States Navy was carried forth by the Navy's political leadership. In the Civil War, however, can be found the first halting steps taken by the Navy itself to provide the public with information about its actions.

In the main, news of the Navy throughout the war was dependent upon battle reports. Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, himself a former newspaper editor,<sup>7</sup> would hand over the communiques to reporters in Washington.<sup>8</sup> Not all of the reports were necessarily handed over, however, for the dictates of military security made certain disclosures inappropriate. In news of failures of the Union Navy's monitors in connection with the September, 1863, attempts to capture Fort Sumter and Charleston harbor, release of information regarding deficiencies in the iron-

clads was stricken by Welles from the reports, "... (it did not appear wise) to make any deficiencies in those vessels prominent in the official reports which were to be published... if monitors are weak in any part, there was no necessity for us to proclaim that weakness to our enemies..."<sup>9</sup>

On several occasions Welles was distressed to find the Army garnering a major share of the limelight in actions which hinged on naval forces. He instructed Admiral Porter to make certain his battle reports were in ahead of those of the military commanders. Porter did at his next opportunity and the Navy, spurred by interservice rivalry, scooped the Army on news of the Battle of Vicksburg. On July 7, 1863, Welles wrote, "... Admiral Porter's brief dispatch to me was promptly transmitted over the whole country... I am told, however, that (Secretary of War) Stanton is excessively angry because Admiral Porter heralded the news to me in advance of General Grant to the War Department... He craves to announce all important information." <sup>10</sup>

#### The Navy and the Press

It was common practice for correspondents to travel with Union armies and, to a lesser extent, with those of the Confederacy. News directly from reporters with the ships was rare. The difficulty of communicating with their papers was the most demanding reason for the high disparity

between news from the front and the lack of it from blockade and river squadrons.

A notable exception to this pattern was a New York reporter, B. S. Osbon,<sup>11</sup> who accompanied the abortive relief expedition to Fort Sumter. The expedition was led by Gustavus V. Fox, later appointed the first Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

It was also Osbon who might, with some justification, be called the Navy's first public relations officer. Through certain connections, he won with Admiral Farragut a combination job as Signal Clerk and Secretary on the Flagship Hartford. In that position he was an eyewitness to the battle with the forts and the capture of New Orleans.<sup>12</sup> He wrote and distributed the story to the New York papers.

By the summer of 1864, Osbon had published a handbook on the Civil War histories of ships of the Union Navy. It was an extremely useful reference work for news editors as well as for contemporary commentators.<sup>13</sup> By that time Osbon had established himself as a sort of clearing house for news about the Navy. He wrote Sunday articles which he sold to a group of 18 newspapers and claimed, at least, to have so established the first news syndicate in America.<sup>14</sup>

One of his methods of operating this syndicate landed him in trouble in November, 1864. While the Powder Boat Expedition against Fort Fisher<sup>15</sup> was being prepared, Osbon

obtained the details of the operation from Admiral Porter and wrote an advance for his newspaper subscribers with the understanding that it was not for use until after the expedition had been completed.

On hearing a rumor that the attack had taken place, a Philadelphia editor printed the story prematurely, giving the enemy abundant information prior to the attack. The editor reportedly was arrested and the paper closed.<sup>16</sup>

Following the successful attack more than a month later, Osbon was put under arrest and clapped into the old Capitol prison in Washington until nearly the end of the war.<sup>17</sup>

#### Information Versus Security

One problem reporters encountered when they embarked in Navy ships was that of censorship. They found that Flag Officers of the Navy could censor their copy or, for that matter, oust them without the story.<sup>18</sup>

The problem of censorship was not exclusive to the Navy, nor could the desire for censorship be laid to the ultraconservatism of naval officers. The problems of informing people through a public press without imparting useful and sometimes essential information to an enemy are myriad and worthy of several volumes. In a civil war, these problems became more complex.

Perhaps the most damning of comments on intelligence

available in the press came from the log of the most successful of the Confederacy's commerce raiders, the CSS Alabama. Captain Semmes, upon capture of the merchantman SS Manchester bound from New York to Liverpool, studied a batch of newspapers found on board and wrote, "I learned from them where all the enemy's gun boats were, and what they were doing...Perhaps this was the only war in which the newspapers ever explained, beforehand, all the movements of armies and fleets to the enemy."<sup>19</sup>

Correspondents were not the sole source of news leaks of security information. Naval officers corresponding with the press caused Flag Officer S. F. DuPont to issue an order<sup>20</sup> prohibiting such correspondence to his South Atlantic Blockading Squadron. On several occasions, violations of his order resulted in disciplinary action against the offenders.

Rear Admiral David D. Porter, commanding the North Atlantic Squadron, also found it necessary to restrain his officers from corresponding with the press and issued a similar general order. It reflected a generally held view of the professional military dealing directly with the press, "...The Commander in Chief is the person to communicate what it may be proper for the public to know, and it will be done in official form. Writing for the press is not the right kind of employment for an officer

of the Navy..."<sup>21</sup>

Information leaks in the Charleston campaign caused Admiral John Dahlgren to write to Secretary Welles, "... There are probably no means upon which the enemy has so relied for information as this insane propensity for making public the most valuable items."<sup>22</sup>

#### For an Informed Public

Meanwhile, the depredations of the Confederate commerce raiders, coupled with the threat of completion in England of the Confederate-contracted ironclads, set the eastern seaboard of the Union into near panic.<sup>23</sup>

The demand for warships to defend the harbors, to chase the raiders, and to patrol the fishing grounds and shipping lanes exerted extreme pressures on the President and the Secretary of the Navy.<sup>24</sup> Metropolitan editors, shipowners, mayors of port cities, governors of seaboard states and members of Congress urged, and none too gently, a departure from sound naval strategy of firm and unrelenting blockade in favor of helter-skelter pursuit of private or individual interests.<sup>25</sup>

Apart from the strategy of the war, there were several painfully learned lessons just as studiously ignored at war's end. One of these was the portent of an aroused but ill-informed public opinion and its resultant effect upon sound naval strategy. Just as the Navy had

repeatedly found that it could not build, equip and man a fleet in times of emergency but had to build, maintain and train one over the years, it became just as unmistakably clear that it could not expect public understanding of its mission and strategy without taking action to cultivate and foster that understanding.

For nearly a generation following the Civil War the Navy languished and regressed.<sup>26</sup> With little public interest in or concern for the Navy of the United States, there was no impetus for propagation of an information base to support naval programs, if, indeed, there were any naval programs.

#### Exhibits to Inform the Public

Yet another field of public relations activity was opened for the Navy by presidential fiat in 1874. President Grant, noting the upcoming exhibition in Philadelphia celebrating the 100th anniversary of United States independence, issued an executive order directing participation of the executive departments of the federal government,

...it is desirable that from the executive departments of the government of the United States, in which there may be articles suitable for the purpose intended, there should appear such articles and materials as will, when presented in a collective exhibition, illustrate the functions and administrative facilities of the Government in time of peace and its resources as a war power,

and thereby serve to demonstrate the nature of our institutions and their adaptations to the wants of the people...<sup>27</sup>

The public relations intention of that order was carried forth in the direction of many exhibits subsequently participated in by the federal government.<sup>28</sup>

In Philadelphia, eight departments took part in the exhibit: Treasury, War, Navy, Interior, Post Office, Agriculture, and the Smithsonian Institution. The Navy contingent representing the Secretary of the Navy on the Exhibit Board was headed by Rear Admiral Thornton A. Jenkins -- in those days a figure of considerable rank for presentation of the Navy's message to the public.

On the exhibition trail, federal participation, including that of the military services, continued through to the turn of the century and beyond.<sup>29</sup>

Perhaps the Navy's most elaborate exhibit was made as a part of the World Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893.<sup>30</sup> A ship model of lathing was built on a brick foundation set on piles driven into Lake Michigan. It was open for touring and featured realistic interiors and exteriors, actual arms and equipment, and had fully dressed mannequins at various stations throughout the "ship." The total Navy exhibit occupied nearly 50,000 square feet of space and cost the Navy \$125,468. A full-time crew was detailed to set up and maintain the exhibit and a part of them, at least, actually lived in quarters



in the bottom-bound "ship."

Aside from this rather small and fundamental activity there was little effort to interpret the Navy to the American public at large in the years described as "The last years of the old Navy."<sup>31</sup>

Naval progress of the 80's was advanced by the vigorous leadership of Secretary of the Navy William H. Hunt. One of the more notable tactics in Hunt's campaign to rebuild the Navy was to bring together selected Senators, Representatives and naval officers for discussion of naval policy. It marked a significant departure from previous norms of professional action in the political realm and helped overcome mutual prejudices and misunderstandings between Congress and the Service.<sup>32</sup>

#### The Navy's Oracle

In 1890, an obscure Professor of naval history and tactics at the Naval War College published a book entitled, The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783. The acclaim accorded Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan's theories of command of the sea propelled him to immediate fame.<sup>33</sup>

Mahan had no connection with an information function in the Navy. Yet his books and articles,<sup>34</sup> coming as they did at a propitious moment in naval affairs formed, in the opinion of the naval historians Harold and Margaret Sprout, the basis of an enlightened naval policy in the United States.<sup>35</sup>

### In Times of Tension

When Theodore Roosevelt was appointed Assistant Secretary of the Navy in 1897, he brought to the Navy Department not only a thorough understanding of the use of naval forces in international affairs, but, also, a remarkable feel for the public press and knowledge in how to use it.

Perhaps the best example of Roosevelt's sagacity in press relations is given in Charles Brown's, The Correspondent's War, when the long delayed and eagerly sought message from Admiral George Dewey reporting the Battle of Manila Bay arrived in a Navy Department stuffed with some fifty news-hungry reporters.

One of the officials on the scene was the Under-Secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt... Reading the message over the shoulders of decoders, Roosevelt took it in instantly. While (Secretary of the Navy John D.) Long was telephoning (President) McKinley for permission to make an announcement to the press, Roosevelt was giving out the news to reporters. Then Long emerged from his office, smiling as he faced the crowd to read in his musical voice the great news from Manila. He did not know that correspondents had already scribbled out their stories and messenger boys even then were pedaling wildly on their bicycles to the telegraph offices. Long's carefully censored version of Dewey's report appeared in the afternoon papers alongside the more detailed account given by Roosevelt...<sup>36</sup>

The complete story told the colorful details, and there was no animosity shown toward Roosevelt for having provided it.

The war with Spain gave the United States Navy a startling demonstration of the effects of public opinion upon strategy.

Naval command of the Caribbean was the strategic key to the war in the Western hemisphere.<sup>37</sup> To counter the challenge of the Spanish Squadron under Admiral Cervera, Admiral William T. Sampson, Fleet Commander in the Caribbean, proposed two strategically sound plans: to take Havana before the arrival of Spanish reinforcements; or to seize San Juan and subsequently locate and destroy the Spanish fleet upon its arrival in the West Indies.<sup>38</sup>

Sampson was given neither option. Public clamor fired by news reports, and congressional and group pressures compelled the Navy Department to direct him, instead, to confine his operations to blockade and cautious bombardments. The Navy Department further withheld some of the best ships of Sampson's fleet and organized them into a "Flying Squadron" which was held at Hampton Roads against the obscure possibility of naval raids on the eastern seaboard of the United States.<sup>39</sup>

The approach of war built an increasing alarm. The Navy Department created a second defense force of several cruisers. This Northern Patrol Force was distributed along the coast from Maine to Virginia.<sup>40</sup>

The news that Cervera had sailed from the Cape Verde

Islands on a Westward course brought panic bordering hysteria along the Atlantic coast as the days passed without further intelligence.<sup>41</sup> Congress directed the Navy department to mobilize the naval militia of the States. This Naval Auxiliary Force manned a makeshift "fleet" of Civil War monitors, and armed yachts and tugs, and took up defense stations from Maine to the Gulf.<sup>42</sup> The resultant, nearly total disorder caused the naval historians, Harold and Margaret Sprout to comment,

Only with the greatest difficulty did the Navy Department prevent the unreasoning and preposterous panic from forcing a complete disruption of the fighting fleet, and the scattering of its units, to guard two thousand miles of coastline against wholly improbable, if not utterly impossible, raids by Cervera's decrepit cruisers.<sup>43</sup>

The role of the press in the Spanish-American War is unique in the annals of reporting.<sup>44</sup> The cooperation afforded correspondents by military and naval commanders was nearly limitless.<sup>45</sup> There were reporters with Dewey, dozens embarked in ships on blockade stations off Cuba, and a fleet of them in dispatch boats darting about the ships, then flying off to Key West to file their stories.

In the main, it was Navy Department policy to deal candidly with the newspapermen who were the representatives of the general public. In his diary Secretary of the Navy Long expressed the sentiment well after being

beseached for additional details on the sinking of the Battleship Maine in Havana Harbor, "...the newspapermen cluster like bees about me...They are gathering information for the public, and it is hardly worth while to be impatient with them when they are really the avenues through which the public, very properly, gets its information."<sup>46</sup>

Coverage of naval action off Cuba, if not accurate, was certainly not wanting for number and activity of correspondents. The German Kaiser was reported to have been highly amused at the thought of the American fleet, accompanied by an entourage of press dispatch boats, awaiting an engagement with the Spanish.

While the press "fleet" caused only a few problems to the maneuvering of Sampson's ships, its presence caused more than a few in the realm of military security. Press reports on fleet movements and possible intentions were relayed the same day to Madrid. The technological progress made in telegraphy had vastly complicated the problem of military security causing censorship units to be established at Key West, Washington, and at seven cable offices in New York.<sup>47</sup>

Naval commanders furnished whatever information they could, "...Admiral Sampson fully recognized the demand of the country for the fullest information which could

properly be furnished, and placed no impediment in the way of this being supplied, beyond what military necessity demanded."<sup>48</sup>

Such were the faint beginnings of public relations in the United States Navy. The Spanish-American War had reinforced other trends developing in the society. As the United States stepped upon the international stage as a budding new power, her citizens were demanding more responsibility from their government. A part of the government's responsibility lay in keeping its citizens advised of its actions. At the turn of the century, the need for public relations was becoming apparent to the more astute naval leaders.

<sup>1</sup>E. B. Potter and Chester W. Nimitz, eds., Sea Power, A Naval History (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), 189, hereafter cited as Potter and Nimitz, Sea Power, and Harold and Margaret Sprout, The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776-1918, (5th ed.) (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966), 34-36. Hereafter cited as Sprout, Rise.

<sup>2</sup>Sprout, Rise, 35-6.

<sup>3</sup>Potter and Nimitz, Sea Power, 188-89, and Sprout, Rise, 28-32.

<sup>4</sup>Sprout, Rise, Chapter 5.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 41-42.

<sup>6</sup>Potter and Nimitz, Sea Power, 223-4

<sup>7</sup>Welles was editor and part owner of the Hartford Times from 1826-36. He founded the Hartford Evening Press in 1856

<sup>8</sup>Richard S. West, "The Navy and the Press During the Civil War," Naval Institute Proceedings, 63:38 (1937). Hereafter cited as West, The Navy and the Press.

<sup>9</sup>Howard K. Beal, ed., Diary of Gideon Welles (3 vols.) (New York, W. W. Norton, 1960), 295-6. Hereafter cited as Beal, Diary.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., Vol. 1, 365.

<sup>11</sup>West, The Navy and The Press, 38.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 39.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 38, and B. S. Osbon, Hand Book of the United States Navy (3 vols.) (New York, W. W. Norton, 1960).

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 39. Although Osbon was one of the first, experimentation with syndicates came as early as 1841. There was a newspaper syndicate in operation in Wisconsin by the end of 1861. See, Elmo S. Watson, A History of Newspaper Syndicates in the United States, (Chicago, 1936), 1-6.

<sup>15</sup>Admiral David D. Porter, USN, The Naval History of the Civil War (New York, The Sherman Publishing Co., 1866).

<sup>16</sup>Although there are multiple references to press disclosure of the plans of the expedition, there are no indications as to which paper or to government actions to close the paper.

<sup>17</sup>West, The Navy and the Press, 39. Also referred to in Howard K. Beal, ed., Diary of Gideon Wells (3 vols.) (New York, W. W. Norton, 1960), 2:205-6, 209. Welles, however, uses the name Osborn. Other primary references use Osbon, which is believed correct.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 38. For additional Flag Officer comment on censoring press copy see, Captain Dudley W. Knox, USN, (Ret.), Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion, (30 vols.) (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1927) series 1, under entry--press, passim.

<sup>19</sup>Civil War Naval Chronology: 1861-65 (6 vols.,) (Navy Department, Naval Histories Division, Washington, GPO, 1961), 2: October 11, 1862, p. 102.

<sup>20</sup>General Order Number 8, February 18, 1862. See, Union Confederate Navy Records, Ser. 1, Vol. 12, 546-7.

<sup>21</sup>General Order Number 13, October 21, 1864, Ibid., 10:576.

<sup>22</sup>Admiral Dahlgren to Secretary Welles, October 7, 1863, Ibid., 15:23-25



<sup>23</sup>Sprout, Rise, 162-63.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>For an example of these many attempts to influence naval policy see Beal, Diary, passim. The agitation of Welles was especially great against the more sensational New York press, see, Diary, 1:435.

<sup>26</sup>Sprout, Rise, 165-182 and Potter and Nimitz, Sea Power, 338-41.

<sup>27</sup>United States Centennial Commission; Report of the Board on Behalf of United States Executive Departments at the International Exhibition Held at Philadelphia, Pa. 1876 (2 vols.) (Washington, GPO, 1884), 1:7. The full report details federal participation including the exhibits of both the War and Navy Departments, which were significant.

<sup>28</sup>Among them the Chicago Exposition (1893), the Nashville Exposition (1897) and the Buffalo Exposition (1901).

<sup>29</sup>Ibid. It is perhaps ironic that President McKinley was assassinated at the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo.

<sup>30</sup>The Navy Department exhibit is described in: Rossiter Johnson, A History of the World's Columbian Exposition (4 vols.) (New York, D. Appleton and Co., 1898), 3:498-500.

<sup>31</sup>Following the Civil War until the beginnings of naval reconstruction in 1881. See Sprout, Rise, Chapter 11.

<sup>32</sup>Sprout, Rise, 185-7 and Thomas Hunt, Life of William H. Hunt (Brattlesboro, Vermont, E. L. Huldreth and Co., 1922), quoted therein.

<sup>33</sup>Sprout, Rise, 202-3 and C. C. Taylor, The Life of Admiral Mahan.

<sup>34</sup>These articles, appearing between 1890 and 1897, were subsequently collected into a single volume, A. T. Mahan, The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future (Boston, Little, Brown and Co., 1897).

<sup>35</sup>Sprout, Rise, 205-8.

<sup>36</sup>Charles H. Brown, The Correspondent's War: Journalists in the Spanish-American War (New York, Scribners, 1967), 196-201. Hereafter cited as Brown, The Correspondent's War.

<sup>37</sup>Rear Admiral French E. Chadwick, USN (Ret), The Relations of the United States and Spain: The Spanish-American War (2 vols.) (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), 1:57, hereafter cited as Chadwick, Relations of U.S. and Spain; G. S. Clarke "Naval Aspects of the Spanish-American War," Brassy's Naval Annual, 125 (1899); and Sprout, Rise, 230-241.

<sup>38</sup>Chadwick, Relations of U.S. and Spain, 1:63, 88.

<sup>39</sup>Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Navy to the President of the United States, (various years), (1898), 3-4. Hereafter cited as Annual Reports of Secretary. Chadwick, Relations of U.S. and Spain, 1:62-63.

<sup>40</sup>Annual Reports of Secretary, (1898), 5.

<sup>41</sup>Sprout, Rise, 235, and Edward N. Doan, "Newspaper Responsibility for the Spanish-American War," unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin (1928).

<sup>42</sup>Annual Reports of Secretary, (1898), 19-20.

<sup>43</sup>Sprout, Rise, 235. For additional descriptions of this panic, see, Theodore Roosevelt - an Autobiography (New York, MacMillan Co., 1913), 214-16; L. S. May, ed., America of Yesterday (Boston, The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1923), 185, hereafter cited as Mayo, America of Yesterday, and Henry Pringle Theodore Roosevelt: A Biography (New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1931), 179.

<sup>44</sup> Brown, The Correspondent's War. Also any of the better works on the history of Journalism.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. vii.

<sup>46</sup> Long, America of Yesterday, 165.

<sup>47</sup> Herbert W. Wilson, The Downfall of Spain: Naval History of the Spanish-American War (London, Sampson Low, Martor & Co., Ltd., 1900), 429-30.

<sup>48</sup> Chadwick, Relations of U.S. and Spain, 1:221.

## CHAPTER II

The Influence of Theodore Roosevelt:  
The Turn of the Century

## Chapter II

The war with Spain had pushed the United States into the international arena of world politics. The turn of the century presented this country with overseas holdings. The Philippines, Guam, American Samoa, and Hawaii - each a significant acquisition in the larger view of an aggressive mercantile policy in the Far East. The occupation of Cuba and Puerto Rico seemed to heighten the need for an isthmian canal to link the Atlantic and Pacific.

For the Navy, the new responsibilities that these possessions demanded were enormous. The strategy of Mahan, which had been sufficiently advanced to cope with problems of the Spanish-American war, were capable also of including the advanced position of U.S. naval posture required by these far-flung commitments.<sup>1</sup>

Advancing technology and new construction had advanced the Navy of the United States to a point where its sea forces were comparable to those of European powers, save, of course, those of Britain.<sup>2</sup> In large measure, this was due to the active appropriations in each of the years 1898-1900. Partly through the popularity for the Navy which had carried over from the war, and partly through the continued stress in international affairs this impetus continued until 1901 when

Congress refused to authorize any ships at all.<sup>3</sup>

Naval policy following the war, as it had many times in the past, reverted to the pre-war modus vivendi and little thought was given to new responsibilities demanded of the Navy. With the reelection of McKinley in 1900 and the continued secretaryship of Long, there was every indication that the Navy could look forward to a continued policy of drift.<sup>4</sup>

In September, 1901, an assassin's bullet took the life of the President and sent striding onto the international scene a man infused with the importance of naval strategy to national security and fully conversant with naval problems, Theodore Roosevelt.

In his first message to Congress, President Roosevelt revealed the philosophy which was both to define and direct<sup>5</sup> naval policy throughout his administration,

...The American people must either build and maintain an adequate Navy or else make up their minds definitely to occupy a secondary position in international affairs, not merely in political, but in commercial matters. It has been well said that there is no surer way of courting national disaster than to be "opulent, aggressive and unarmed."<sup>6</sup>

It was characteristic of the man to link the national interest with national security and to state both in terms of the wants of the people of the nation.<sup>7</sup>

Roosevelt began immediately to build the Navy -- a drive which did not slacken until 1905. Within four years Congress had authorized ten first-class battle-ships, four armored cruisers, and seventeen lesser ships with the whole totaling over a quarter million tons displacement.<sup>8</sup> In the same period naval appropriations had climbed from \$85 million to \$118 million, a peacetime record.<sup>9</sup>

Roosevelt's leadership in the building drive was characterized by pressure on Congress, backed by direct appeal to the people of the nation. Reflecting the Commander-in-Chief's ambitions, the recommendations of the General Board and of the Secretary of the Navy pushed for increased construction in an effort to gain comparability with the navies of Europe.<sup>10</sup>

Navy reaction to press comment became evident in this same period. In July, 1904, the Chief Clerk of the Navy engaged a New York clipping service for, "...notices referring to matters connected with the Navy, special articles, editorials, etc..."<sup>11</sup> Here was some positive feedback.

#### Personnel Needs

With the increase in fleet tonnage, the requirement for greater numbers of personnel in the Navy placed additional emphasis upon recruiting. Somewhere

in this period,<sup>12</sup> the Navy found it helpful to develop a publicity organization as an aid to recruitment.

In 1902 Roosevelt paid special attention to the Navy's personnel needs in his annual message to Congress.<sup>13</sup> In 1905, this same message had become almost a plea.<sup>14</sup>

For the Navy's part, recruiting went on at an accelerated pace, but not always without its problems. One recruiting team in the midwest repeatedly found adverse and non-factual stories and comments about the Navy appearing in the local press just prior to its scheduled visits. These occurrences caused special mention in the Secretary's annual report to the President,

...the Bureau (Bureau of Navigation, predecessor to the current Bureau of Naval Personnel) believes that a more thorough and more widely diffused knowledge of the conditions of life in, and opportunities afforded by, the naval service is the best remedy against unjust and harmful criticism.<sup>15</sup>

The type of criticism to which the Navy objected can be seen in the Sauda, Colorado, Mail in noting the arrival of a Navy recruiting party, "...If your son is an incorrigible and you think he will either go to the gallows or to the penitentiary, send him to the Navy."<sup>16</sup> Taking up the gauntlet, the Army & Navy Journal



replied,

The representative, fair-minded newspapers of the United States could render a most helpful service to the country by reminding their readers on every proper occasion that the Army and Navy are open only to bright reputable, cleanly and ambitious young men, that they are not reformatory institutions, but organizations in which character, manhood and merit are indispensable to advancement.<sup>17</sup>

Whatever the problems of Navy recruiters in gaining publicity for their drives, some success must have attended their efforts. In November, 1907, the Bureau of Navigation received a letter from a publicity organization in Rochester, New York, offering to conduct a publicity campaign on behalf of Navy recruiting. The Bureau graciously turned down the commercial offer replying,

...The methods now being employed in obtaining recruits for the Navy have proven efficient and the results are very satisfactory...It has been the Bureau's experience that interesting news articles are eagerly sought after and there has been no difficulty in having published any items of interest regarding the naval service.<sup>18</sup>

#### Considerations of Image

Sensitivity to the image of the Navy and its men was not confined to recruiters. In 1905, an employe of the Navy Department was dismissed for refusal to carry out a contract to let a part of his house to a

sailor because, "...his wife feared her 'social position' would be affected if a man in sailor's clothes were seen going into or coming out of her house." The incident was considered important enough to be noted in the Secretary's annual report to the President.<sup>19</sup>

A similar but previous happenstance supposedly gave rise to the Navy's first newspaper in Newport, Rhode Island. In 1901, a yeoman from the naval base reportedly saw the sign in a downtown store window, "Dogs and Sailors Keep Out." He was repulsed when he tried to enter forcibly and returned to the base to vent his frustration by publishing an underground newspaper decrying the outrage.<sup>20</sup>

#### Information With Purpose

United States Naval Intelligence at the turn of the century consisted of but seven officers in the Navy Department and four naval attaches overseas. One of its annual publications, Notes on Naval Progress, was an interesting reference work for comparative statistics on the world naval powers. In January, 1902, the New York Sun noted praise for the work by a correspondent of the London Times,

...The Admiralty conceals its knowledge even from the House of Commons...even when the Parliament insists on obtaining a return of the fleets of the Powers, the bare return is given without any attempt at summarizing the

results, or any endeavor to make the information furnished of practical use for purposes of discussion. We have to go to the American Naval Intelligence...to obtain a summary of this information.<sup>21</sup>

A modicum of press praise was accorded to the information function in the Navy, "...the difference (between British and American intelligence) is wholly to the credit of our small intelligence staff."<sup>22</sup>

#### Press Tours

In the informal organization of the period, information was imparted in a number of ways. One such instance was a tour of the Navy Yard at Puget Sound for seventy-five members of the Utah Press Club in June, 1902.<sup>23</sup> Sponsored jointly by the Press Club of Seattle and the Commandant of the Yard, the guests were given a list of "rules" to be followed. Some of them were enlightening:

Rule 2. Refrain from using unnecessary violence to persons not in government employ. Take a fall out of anything in uniform, but abuse non-combatants only after returning home, and then only on the editorial page.

Rule 3. Do not pull the tail of the bull terrier belonging to the Commandant. Said terrier has no sense of humor, but has been brought up to scrap first and leave arbitration to the United States Senate.

Rule 4. Do not think that because you are a taxpayer and therefore a part owner of the United States Navy, that you can carry the Oregon home for a souvenir.

Rule 8. Coming from the interior, you may with perfect safety observe to the officers of the Wisconsin that the Oregon is a wonder. But don't get angry if an officer replies that you don't know a camel from a cruiser.

Rule 11. Don't ask if the band can play "Suwanee River." They can play anything from the "Dead March in Saul" to table stakes in the guard house.

Rule 12. Walk on the grass, the walks, the regulations or on anything else except the water.

The "rules" were made by the Yard Commandant, Captain William T. Burwell.

#### The Navy League

In December, 1902, a potentially formidable and certainly less inhibited agency for publicity was founded outside the confines of government, the Navy League of the United States.<sup>24</sup> The League was formed by men who believed, "...the American people would have to be educated to appreciate the connection between sea power and America's new international responsibilities. Thus educated, they would exert pressure upon Congress to provide with generosity and promptness for a suitable peacetime Navy."<sup>25</sup>

The extent of the Navy's involvement itself in formation of the League is not known. The Navy's Office of Naval Intelligence had been following closely the the operations of similar organizations in Europe.<sup>26</sup>

The actual proposal for an American league was made at an annual meeting in New York of the Naval Order of the United States in November, 1902, presided over by Rear Admiral Albert Barker, Commandant of the New York Navy Yard.<sup>27</sup> Barker urged creation of the League as an adjunct to the Navy "to enlighten (the) people...on naval matters and tell them what a Navy means to the country and what it ought to mean to them."<sup>28</sup> Approval for the group was obvious.

In the League's creation was an organization which could bring to the attention of the American public and to Congress the salient issues which demanded a first-class naval force and could challenge, as well, the anti-preparedness propaganda of the peace groups.

To bring its message to the public's attention, the League planned to use several devices.<sup>29</sup> It foresaw speakers touring throughout the country; issuance of press releases and information pamphlets to selected editors, Congressmen and opinion leaders; wide distribution of the League-produced magazine and local sections meeting regularly to discuss naval matters and celebrate commemorative occasions.<sup>30</sup>

On October 6, 1906, the Navy League section in Philadelphia created one such occasion which was called, "Navy Day." Later in its history the Navy League would

hold an annual celebration on October 27, the birthday of Theodore Roosevelt. This first gathering on "Navy Day" attracted over 2,000 members to Atlantic City where the featured speaker, Secretary of the Navy Charles Bonaparte, vigorously attacked "false and misleading statements by peace groups" and a hostile press.<sup>31</sup>

In his annual message to Congress in December, 1906, Roosevelt requested sweeping personnel changes for the Navy but only one capital ship per year.<sup>31A</sup> Here was a place where the League might use its influence to effect. The Navy, the League's magazine, called for the League to act.<sup>32</sup> In February, the League convention met in Washington and endorsed the President's program. Roosevelt's address to the delegates who called at the White House revealed his hopes for concerted League action,

...The President and the Congress both need to be reminded that it is necessary for the sake of America to encourage the upbuilding and the maintenance of the United States Navy...I want all of you in your respective homes, through the organs of public opinion, by your influence upon your representatives at every branch at Washington to see that the needs of the Navy are not forgotten in the future. The Navy has no one to speak for it save those who speak for it because of their devotion to the honor and the integrity of the United States; and I ask that you and those like you make your voices heard for the general welfare amid the din of voices that speak only for special interests.<sup>33</sup>

For all of the expectations visited upon the League, its initial performance proved disappointing. Hamstrung by financial difficulties, defied by public apathy for the subject of increasing the nation's arms, opposed by both peace groups and an increasingly hostile Congress, the League's operations until 1908 fell far short of its potential.<sup>34</sup>

Membership in, and support for the League had been expected from industrialists and wealthy businessmen. The expectation never materialized. American industry and commerce were thriving and a big navy might have led to international tensions and ultimately to war. The disruption of commerce would have far offset the short term gains from increased defense spending.<sup>35</sup>

#### Recommendations For A Bureau of Information

In December, 1905, the President of the General Board, Admiral George Dewey, recommended to the Secretary that the Navy and the Army consider seeking legislation which would prohibit the publishing, in time of war or when war was imminent, "...any information of a military nature which is not furnished for publication by the War or Navy Departments."<sup>36</sup> The recommendation presupposed, but did not specifically address the details of an information organization.

Following a conference with War Department officials, Secretary Bonaparte replied that the time was

inopportune for such legislation. He did consider the recommendation appropriate, however, in time of national peril and directed the Board to draft a bill for submission at a later date.<sup>37</sup> He admonished the Board to carefully consider, "...any measure which would seriously and injuriously affect the legitimate business of the press or interfere with the natural, and indeed patriotic desire of the general community for prompt and reliable information respecting public affairs in time of war."<sup>38</sup>

The General Board returned the proposed legislation to the Secretary in April.<sup>39</sup> Contained therein was a provision for presidential designation of officers for special duties in the preparation and release of military information, including the creation of what might be called a Bureau of Information.<sup>40</sup> The proposal evidently was shelved to await a propitious moment, but thinking had progressed to an active interest in the problem in times of emergency if not in times of peace.

#### Exhibitions and Naval Reviews

For European naval powers, the 1890's were marked by international naval visits and naval reviews in great races for prestige and popular support.<sup>41</sup> The United States abstained from these extravaganzas until 1902



when President Roosevelt's invitation brought Germany's newest battleships into New York for display. The following year, four American cruisers under Rear Admiral Charles S. Cotton appeared in succession at Marseilles, Kiel and Portsmouth, England. In 1904, Roosevelt sent six battleships and eight cruisers to tour and call at the ports throughout the Mediterranean.<sup>42</sup>

In 1905, fleet visits were exchanged with the French, and the British Navy sent a contingent of six battleships to New York, where, interspersed with American ships, they formed a line in the Hudson stretching from Fifty-fourth Street to Grant's Tomb.<sup>43</sup> In the same year Roosevelt inaugurated a series of naval reviews in front of his home on Long Island Sound where, according to Hart, "...the President's lawn was packed with important guests. Wanting a good press for the Fleet, Roosevelt asked journalists to the parades to get them 'under the naval spell.'"<sup>44</sup>

In 1906, the President sent eight battleships to the Algecirras Conference which was meeting to settle the Moroccan dispute between France and Germany. The ships next went to the International Exposition at Bordeaux and then on to Portsmouth for the British-Russian pageant.<sup>45</sup> The ships had just time enough to return to the United States for the April, 1907,

convening of the Jamestown Exposition

The display, according to Collier's Weekly, "surpassed anything the Western Hemisphere had ever accomplished in that line."<sup>46</sup> Squadron's of ships representing thirteen nations joined the entire Atlantic Fleet in Hampton Roads on public display.<sup>47</sup> General visiting aboard the ships to afford the public the opportunity to examine the vessels, parades, inter-ship boat races and other sporting events -- all were included in the plan to familiarize the public with and to popularize the Navy.<sup>48</sup> Navy participation in the St. Louis Louisiana Purchase Exposition,<sup>49</sup> where a full-scale mock-up of a U.S. Navy man-o-war was constructed, paled when compared to the full exhibition of the real thing. Navy recruiters were on hand to take advantage of the spectacle.

#### The Cruise of the Great White Fleet

As the ships of the fleet rode at anchor in Hampton Roads, a rumor cropped up that the Jamestown display was nothing compared to what was coming -- a 'round the world cruise of the battle fleet.

The news of the cruise was announced by Secretary of the Navy Victor Metcalf in an interview in San Francisco in July<sup>50</sup> Editorial and Congressional reaction to the announcement was immediate. Along the eastern seaboard voices were raised against stripping the

Atlantic of its first line of defense in favor of a "Training Cruise" to the Pacific.<sup>51</sup>

The Chairman of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, Eugene Hale of Maine, went so far as to declare that the fleet could not go because Congress would refuse to appropriate the necessary funds. Roosevelt countered the threat by replying that the Navy had sufficient funds to carry them to the Pacific and that if Congress should decide to leave them there, that was Congress' problem.<sup>52</sup>

Reaction in the international press fanned the flames in the Yellow Journals of the United States.<sup>53</sup> Meanwhile, the Navy made preparations for the cruise and Roosevelt selected the journalists who would accompany the ships and tell the story the President wanted told.<sup>54</sup> According to Hart,<sup>55</sup>

...favorable accounts could be expected from writers who were also naval officers. The high-circulation Harper's Weekly was the outlet for the stories of Lieutenant Commander Philip Andrews and Marine Captain Henry C. David...Correspondents from big New York papers and the press associations (however) presented a problem. Men like R. H. Patchin, N. Rose, R. Zogbaum, J. R. Crowell, R. Berry and R. Bennett insisted that they were reporters, not publicity men. To win berths on the cruise, however, all had to agree that every word would be passed upon by duly appointed naval officers.

On December 16, 1907, to tunes of brass bands and

news by the wire services clicking word of their departure, the sixteen battleships which comprised the Great White Fleet weighed anchor and proceeded slowly in column past the Presidential yacht Mayflower and out to sea.

Extravagant publicity had preceded the fleet's departure. It continued to accompany its every move as it sailed around the Horn into the Pacific, called at coastal ports and then proceeded on to the Far East, thence to the Mediterranean and finally returned home.<sup>56</sup>

The effect upon world opinion left in the wake of the ships was significant.<sup>57</sup> United States and foreign press which had criticized the cruise at its inception heralded its success upon its termination.<sup>58</sup> The tributes, however, were not without reservation.

"Publicity," said Hart, "was, in itself, a part of the voyage's history -- and also a source for it."<sup>59</sup> The accounts of the correspondents who accompanied the ships can attest to the statement. The newspapermen, needing colorful stories to file, "...were creating what, in the jargon of the future, might be called an image."<sup>60</sup> The "image," was not without its effect, however, and "veteran officers were beginning to understand the rudiments of public relations."<sup>61</sup>

One of the immediate effects was in the boost to recruitment attributed by the Secretary of the Navy

to the publicity surrounding the voyage.<sup>62</sup> The overall popularization of the Navy was more important.

As Roosevelt later recalled, "...My prime purpose was to impress the American people; and this purpose was fully achieved...No single thing in the history of the new United States Navy has done as much to stimulate popular interest and belief in it as the world cruise."<sup>63</sup>

That particular effect to dramatize a cause had been forecast by the London Spectator before the cruise began,

...All over America the people will follow the movements of the fleet; they will learn something of the intricate details of the coaling and the commissariat work under warlike conditions; and in a word their attention will be aroused...we are sure that, apart from increasing the efficiency of the existing fleet, this is what Mr. Roosevelt has in mind.<sup>64</sup>

Certainly that was true. If the effect did not get the message across to Congress in the waning days of Roosevelt's administration, perhaps it wasn't lost on the American public at large.

<sup>1</sup>Harold and Margaret Sprout, The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776 - 1918, (5th ed.) (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966), 250-257, hereafter cited as Sprout, Rise, and E. B. Potter and Chester W. Nimitz, eds., Sea Power, A Naval History (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), 378-387, hereafter cited as Potter and Nimitz, Sea Power.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>G. C. O'Gara, Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of the Modern American Navy (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1943), 12.

<sup>6</sup>Messages and Papers of the Presidents (Burlington National Lit. Edition), 6667. Hereafter referred to as M&P.

<sup>7</sup>See for instance, annual messages to Congress 1902-1907.

<sup>8</sup>Roosevelt's estimate of relative U.S. naval strength in 1905 placed the United States second only to Great Britain and France. See Bishop, Roosevelt, Vol. 1. 366.

<sup>9</sup>Sprout, Rise, 260-1 and Potter and Nimitz, Sea Power, 382-3.

<sup>10</sup>Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Navy to the President of the United States, (various years), 1902-5), hereafter cited as Annual Reports of Secretary.

<sup>11</sup>Files of the Office of the Secretary of the Navy, National Archives, Record Group 80, file 7546. Letter from Office of the Secretary of Navy to Henry Romeike, Inc. dated 7 July, 1904. Similar offers from clipping services had been consistently turned down between 1898-1903.

<sup>12</sup>Development of a formal publicity bureau within the recruiting organization is obscure. Many references point to activity in this area in the period 1902-05. The first reference to a formal publicity bureau with headquarters in New York is contained in Annual Reports of Secretary, (1910), 304.

<sup>13</sup>M&P, 6762-3

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 7380-2

<sup>15</sup>Bureau of Navigation Addendum to Annual Reports of Secretary, (1905), 15.

<sup>16</sup>Army and Navy Journal, July 15, 1905, p. 1239:2. Hereafter cited as Journal.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>"Publicity" letter to Secretary of Navy dated November 30, 1907, and Bureau of Navigation reply dated December 4, 1907, Navy Department file, Office of Secretary of Navy, National Archives, Record Group 80, RI 27416.

<sup>19</sup>Annual Reports of Secretary, (1905), 11.

<sup>20</sup>The origins of the Newport Navallog are related in the April 14, 1967 edition, p. 4. They are based upon an interview between the editor of the Navallog and a personal friend of the founder, Yeoman Fred Buenzle. Encouragement for continuation of the paper was said to have come from President Theodore Roosevelt.

<sup>21</sup>Journal, January 25, 1902, p. 529:2. Other statistical compilations of Naval Intelligence proved useful to the Navy League as well.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>An account of the event is contained in, Journal, June 28, 1902, P. 1095:2-3.

<sup>24</sup>An extremely well documented history of the Navy League in its first fifty years of operation (1902-1952), Armin Rappaport, The Navy League of the United States (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1962). Hereafter cited as Rappaport, Navy League.

<sup>25</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 2 and Office of Naval Intelligence, General Information Series No. 20, "Some Navy Leagues," (Washington, 1901). Among the more successful of the European groups were those of Great Britain and Germany.

<sup>27</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 3.

<sup>28</sup> Rappaport, Navy League, 3.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Journal, October 13, 1906, p. 170:2-3. The London section of the Navy League also sponsored in 1906 a Washington's Birthday Ball. Presiding was U.S. Ambassador and New York Tribune publisher, Whitelaw Reid. See Journal, April 14, 1906, p. 912:2.

<sup>31A</sup> M&P, 7403-7450.

<sup>32</sup> Rappaport, Navy League, 12.

<sup>33</sup> Quoted in Journal, March 2, 1907, p. 724:2.

<sup>34</sup> Rappaport, Navy League, 6-15.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>36</sup> Recommendation of the General Board, No. 441, dated December 20, 1905. Navy Department files, Federal Records Center, Alexandria, Virginia. Contained in records of the Office of Information, Philibert Papers.

<sup>37</sup> Secretary of the Navy letter 21109 dated February 9, 1906 to the President of the General Board. Navy Department Files, Federal Records Center, Alexandria, Virginia. Contained in records of the Office of Information, Philibert Papers.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> See General Board to Secretary of Navy No. 441, dated April 26, 1906. Navy Department files, Federal Records Center, Alexandria, Virginia. Contained in records of the Office of Information, Philibert Papers.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 2, and Section 3 of proposed bill.

<sup>41</sup> Robert A. Hart, The Great White Fleet; Its' Voyage Around the World, 1907-1909 (Boston, Little, Brown and Co., 1965) Chapter 1. Hereafter cited as Hart, Great White Fleet.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.



<sup>44</sup>Hart, Great White Fleet, 21.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 22

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>For a detailed account of the planning for Navy participation see, Annual Reports of Secretary, (1906), 429-30. The planning board consisted of Rear Admiral (retired) P. F. Harrington, the Chief of Staff of the Atlantic Fleet, and the Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Navigation.

<sup>49</sup>For a description of Navy participation in St. Louis see Journal, March 12, 1904, p. 740:1-2.

<sup>50</sup>Metcalf announced the Atlantic-to-Pacific portion of the cruise. The full plan to circumnavigate the globe was not announced until after the fleet's departure from Hampton Roads in December. There is also some evidence that the announcement by Metcalf was a slip, stealing the thunder from Roosevelt. See, Thomas A. Bailey, Theodore Roosevelt and the Japanese-American Crises (Gloucester, Massachusetts, Peter Smith, 1964), Chapter 10. Hereafter cited as Bailey, T.R. and J-A Crises.

<sup>51</sup>Bailey, T.R. and J-A Crises, 225-7; Theodore Roosevelt - an Autobiography (New York, MacMillan Co., 1913), 568, hereafter cited as Roosevelt - Autobiography, and Annual Reports of Secretary, (1908), 5-6.

<sup>52</sup>Bailey, T. R. and J-A Crises, 225-7 and Roosevelt Autobiography, 558.

<sup>53</sup>Bailey, T. R. and J-A Crises, Chapter 11.

<sup>54</sup>Hart, Great White Fleet, 41 and Theodore Roosevelt to T. Newberry, Assistant Secretary of Navy, August 10, 1906, Roosevelt Papers quoted therein.

<sup>55</sup>Hart, Great White Fleet, 42-3.

<sup>56</sup>For a description of the publicity operation relative to the cruise in both the United States and foreign press see, Hart, Great White Fleet. An

evaluation of the cruise's effects is contained in Bailey, T. R. AND J-A Crises, Chapter 12; Sprout, Rise, 284-5 and in William R. Braisted, The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1897-1909 (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1958), 223-31.

<sup>57</sup> Three volumes containing newspaper clippings collected from around the world relative to the cruise are in the Navy Library, Navy Department. Collector unknown.

<sup>58</sup> Hart, Great White Fleet, 296-7.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., xi

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>62</sup> Annual Reports of Secretary, (1908), 349; (1909), 320.

<sup>63</sup> Roosevelt Autobiography, 593, 595.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 595.

### CHAPTER III

Building for War and Establishment of  
the Navy News Bureau

### Chapter III

With the departure from the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt and the succession of William Howard Taft, the question arose whether the naval policy of Roosevelt would carry over to his chosen successor.

There was little question that Taft's foreign policy bordered on isolationism.<sup>1</sup> The import upon naval policy, which is so inextricably tied thereto, remained obscure. Taft's steps on the naval scene seemed to be governed by fear of a failure to keep up in the naval race with Europe.<sup>2</sup> The result was that the ship construction program advanced by Roosevelt generally was continued by Taft.<sup>3</sup>

The naval policy of the administration did not enjoy Congressional support, however, and the recommendations of the Navy General Board for four battleships in both 1910 and 1911 were pared to two by the President in an effort to gain legislative support.<sup>4</sup>

Seeking to take his cause directly to the people, Taft staged dramatic fleet reviews in both San Diego and New York which provided platforms for public appeals by both the President and his Secretary of the Navy, George von Lengerke Meyer. The reviews were timed for November, 1911, just prior to the opening sessions of Congress. The efforts appeared for naught, however, for the Democratic-dominated House Naval Affairs Committee reported a naval appropriation

bill without provision for even one battleship.<sup>6</sup> The administration's proposals were in considerable difficulty.

#### Arousal of the Navy League

The Navy League, stirred to new life, began support for a continued building program in 1909. In February, following the convention held at Fortress Monroe to welcome home the fleet from its world cruise, the League released a resume of its convention platforms to the press of the nation. By March, ninety-five articles had appeared in fifty-eight newspapers.<sup>7</sup>

In April, the League's new secretary, Henry H. Ward, set out, with approval of the Board of Directors and the informal endorsement of the Secretary of the Navy, to publish for the first time a comprehensive booklet enumerating the planks of the League's platform.<sup>8</sup> Entitled, "Patriotic Reasons for the Navy League of the United States," it was intended for release to editors and opinion leaders. Initial distribution was made in July to 5,000 carefully chosen individuals.<sup>9</sup> Before year's end an additional 20,000 were distributed as well as 40,000 pieces of three other pamphlets.<sup>10</sup>

In 1910, League action was active in combating propaganda of the peace groups. In the upcoming debates on the naval appropriations bill of 1910-1911, the

League foresaw a major test. Two weeks before the vote was taken, the League sent letters to members in thirty-three states with a listing of Congressmen known to be opposed to or not favoring the increased budget. The letters urged members to put pressure on their Congressmen and to agitate in their local press.<sup>11</sup> When the bill passed the House, the League stood to share in some of the credit.

By the time the bill had gone to the Senate in May, 1910, the League had held its annual convention and made wide distribution of yet another pamphlet urging increased appropriations for ship construction. The Senate measure passed increasing the number of ships authorized by the House.<sup>12</sup> While credit could not be laid solely to League efforts, the success attending their labors in pushing for greater preparedness did serve to increase their self-confidence and offer some assurance that League drives could expect tangible results.<sup>13</sup>

At the end of the fiscal year on March 30, 1911, League officials could look back with considerable gratification. Membership had grown to 7,000; over 80,000 publicity releases had been issued with a high incidence of their use; and membership sections had become more active.<sup>14</sup> The League was able to receive the congratulations of the Secretary of the Navy with

a feeling of accomplishment.<sup>15</sup>

The League's annual convention was held in Washington in February, 1912. Guests attending included the President, the Secretary and Assistant Secretaries of the Navy, and the Chairmen of the House Appropriations, Naval, and Foreign Affairs Committees. The delegates endorsed the President's two-battleship program in spite of the fact that the Democratic caucus in the House had gone on record in January against any capital ships.<sup>16</sup>

In March the League sent letters to its entire membership urging support for the building program and sent like information to about 200 selected editors suggesting editorials or news items. Press response was gratifying as a large number of newspapers came out in favor of the two-battleship program.<sup>17</sup> The bill, however, cleared the House as it had been reported out of the Naval Affairs Committee -- without provision for a single capital ship.<sup>18</sup> The Senate, however, inserted the two-battleship provision, and the bill went into conference.

While the Senate-House committee was meeting, the League continued to press for the program. It sent a circular to 250 small country newspapers, to twenty larger papers and news services and to each Senator and Congressman. The Committee compromised on one capital ship. The bill of 1912, moreover,

provided for a personnel increase of 4,000 sailors and 400 marines and for the construction of six destroyers, eight submarines, and four supply vessels. The total bill represented the largest naval appropriation in American history to that date.<sup>19</sup>

As the lame-duck Congress met to consider funds for the 1913-14 budget, the League was setting out again to provide support for an increased building program designed to keep the United States Navy on a footing comparable to that of the major European powers. The Navy League of the United States had begun to perform with effect.<sup>20</sup> It did so with the active cooperation of the Navy.

It is noteworthy that, in the Taft administration, Congress significantly increased naval appropriations some sixty million dollars over the last four years of the Roosevelt administration.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, ship construction was curtailed. The difference lay essentially in pork-barrel legislation and patronage.<sup>22</sup>

#### Restriction on Information

In November, 1911, a British magazine published<sup>23</sup> a lengthy and detailed article on the construction and operation of United States' submarines. The Navy Department began an immediate investigation to determine who was responsible for the release of security information.



While later investigation pointed to a civilian employe at the Fore River Shipbuilding Company,<sup>24</sup> Secretary Meyer issued an order in December virtually stifling the free flow of any information to the mass media.

General Order No. 139  
December 16, 1911

No person belonging to the Navy, or employed under the Navy Department, shall convey or disclose by oral or written communications, publications, or any other means, except as may be required by his official duties, any information whatever concerning the naval or military establishment or forces, or concerning any person, thing, plan or measure pertaining thereto, or any information that might be of possible assistance to a foreign power, without the express approval of the Navy Department, and all articles containing detailed information concerning the naval establishment or forces shall be submitted before publication to the Navy Department, Division of Operations of the Fleet, Office of Naval Intelligence for scrutiny.

George von Lengerke Meyer  
Secretary of the Navy<sup>25</sup>

The test for the order was not long in coming. The following month, an explosion in the Navy Yard at Mare Island, California, brought immediate inquiry from the press. The Yard Commandant, acting under General Order 139 refused to give out information concerning the incident. The Vallejo Evening Chronicle, through its representative in Congress, complained of the repressive measure. Replying to Representative J. R.

Knowland, the Assistant Secretary outlined the reasons for the Commandant's refusal to give out the information. In a separate letter to the Yard Commandant, The Secretary of the Navy amplified the intent of his instruction, "It was not the Department's intention...to forbid giving information of no military value to persons or newspapers: it is left to the judgment of commandants and commanding officers to decide what properly may be withheld."<sup>26</sup> Regardless of the intention, the statute remained on the books without modification.

The schizophrenic nature of the Navy's desire on the one hand to win support through the publicity activities of the Navy League and on the other to deny the press access to worthwhile subjects of interest seems anomalous. In February, 1912, while cooperating with the League's convention in Washington, the Secretary of the Navy turned down a request from Gilson Gardner of the Washington Bureau of the Newspaper Enterprise Association for permission to place a correspondent on board a flotilla of torpedo boats during a cruise down the west coast.<sup>28</sup> The reasons for the denial were, "hardship of the cruise and considerations of security." The Secretary did offer, however, to have one of the officers of the flotilla

write the article.<sup>9</sup>

In actuality, news of the Navy had traditionally emanated from the Navy Department; specifically from the Office of the Secretary. In February, 1910, F. R. Low, the editor of Power magazine, had written directly to the Navy's Bureau of Steam Engineering asking to be put on the mailing list for news made public.<sup>30</sup> The Chief of the Bureau replied that "information...given out from any Bureau of the Navy Department must, under the order of the Secretary, come directly from his office..."<sup>31</sup> Low's second letter to the Secretary was answered by the Assistant Secretary,

The Department keeps no mailing list for the purpose of distributing news items. Any news for the press is given out verbally to various newspaper correspondents and to the representatives of the various press associations, who make it a practice of calling at the Department daily for the purpose of gathering news in the manner stated.<sup>32</sup>

While it isn't obvious why the first reply couldn't have given Mr. Low the information he needed, it is clear that the function of informing the public through the mass media was firmly vested in the Secretary of the Navy. Perhaps, with a view toward press interest, the incident inspired the Secretary to stir the Bureaus for more information, "...with a view to supplying the public press...with items that may come

up of possible interest...the Department desires to be furnished with brief statements of such items...as can properly be made public."<sup>33</sup>

Wilson, Daniels, and the Navy

The succession of Woodrow Wilson to the presidency installed Josephus Daniels as Secretary of the Navy. Former publisher of the Raleigh News and Observer, Daniels had been, as well, Chairman of the Publicity Bureau of the National Committee and had served actively in Wilson's campaign. The importance of news was familiar to the new Secretary even if the Navy wasn't.<sup>34</sup>

On March 6, 1913, the day after he took office, Daniels sent a memorandum to the Bureaus and Offices of the Navy Department requiring that all articles intended for the press be submitted to him.<sup>35</sup> The order was repeated in April<sup>36</sup> and reemphasized in September:

The Secretary of the Navy directs that all articles for the press be submitted to him before they are given out. It is directed that all memoranda for the press prepared in the various bureaus or offices be sent to the Secretary of the Navy through his private secretary.

It is further directed that initials or identifying marks be placed at the top of press notices so as to indicate the Bureau or office preparing same.

While the utmost publicity consistent with existing regulations and the National Defense is desired; it has become necessary, in view of certain recent unauthorized

publications,<sup>37</sup> to insist upon a strict and careful compliance with the broad general requirement that all articles or information intended for publication or the press be revised in the Secretary's office.

Chiefs of Bureaus and heads of offices and divisions will take such steps as may be necessary to fully acquaint the personnel... with the requirements of this order.<sup>38</sup>

The last two paragraphs were additions to the first two memoranda, and an unequivocal announcement that Secretary Daniels intended to handle the public relations of the Navy Department himself, through the person of his private secretary, Howard A. Banks.

Banks, a former North Carolina journalist, is known to have handled many public relations functions for the Secretary, not the least of which was coordination of Navy participation in the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco, 1914-1916<sup>39</sup>

#### Naval Aspects of Wilsonian Policy

Following Wilson's election, navalphiles and others interested in military preparedness had expected the President to follow in Taft's footsteps in advocating an active building program for the Navy. The expectations were based both on the Democratic party's platform and upon Wilson's published philosophy concerning the utility of strong naval power in the protection of neutral rights.<sup>40</sup>

In his 1913 message to Congress, however, the

President made no mention of naval policy, but simply endorsed the annual reports of the executive departments.<sup>41</sup> For his part, Secretary Daniels made no significant departure from the proposals of the previous administration but did scale down the recommendations of the General Board for four battleships and a large number of smaller warships and auxiliaries to two battleships, eight destroyers and three submarines.<sup>42</sup>

The action was more surprising for its apparent lack of perception of growing world-wide armaments and their implications for U.S. foreign and naval policy.<sup>43</sup> While the Anglo-German naval equipoise and limitations of physical distance promised territorial security for the Western Hemisphere, the machinations of the Great Powers in the Far East portended a clash with American interests there. For the Navy, the implications pointed to the necessity of increased fleet strength and readiness.<sup>44</sup>

Daniels, meanwhile, turned his major attention to the limitation of armaments, to the expansion of the domestic shore establishment and to welfare measures for naval personnel.<sup>45</sup> Nowhere did he address the strategic implications confronting the Navy, which was all the more surprising for in that year, the General Board was allowed to place its recommendations

upon the public record.<sup>46</sup> For the first time this naval planning and advisory group was allowed to include an appendix to the Secretary's report and permitted to have a representative testify before the naval committees of Congress.<sup>47</sup>

The memorandum of the Board focused upon the lack of orderly development of the Navy and the need for a long-term policy, "...founded on our national needs and aims." To this end, the Board favored "giving the widest publicity" to its own views on policy, "taking the people and the Congress into...full confidence...inviting intelligent criticism as well as support."<sup>48</sup> In its first such statement, the Navy's planning body had enunciated a fundamental public relations policy admirably.

The naval appropriations bill, after spirited debate in both House and Senate, was signed into law essentially as the administration had recommended it -- just two days after the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Ferdinand on June 28, 1914. Contributing to its passage had been the newly found voice of the professional Navy speaking with recognition of the effects of public opinion upon national and naval policy. Captain Alfred T. Mahan had voiced the principle several years before, "...public opinion,

in operation, constitutes national policy..."<sup>49</sup>

Perhaps Secretary Daniels had played a role in the Board's expressed philosophy, although there is no evidence which might confirm such influence. On March 10, 1913, an entry in his diary reads, "Conferred with Naval (General) Board about the necessity of publicity --about the ways to secure accurate news to the people about the doings in the Navy. Too little is published and I planned to see that the public is acquainted with all that happens of interest."<sup>50</sup>

#### With Europe at War

War in Europe brought to America an anxiety as well as a sense of urgency. The traditional feelings of security which had marked American attitudes in the pre-war period crumbled before the spectre of unpreparedness. The drives of the preparedness groups, beginning in late 1914, gathered momentum during 1915 -- due largely to public interest in the subject.

The interests of the administration, however, were at considerable variance. The recommendations of the General Board for the building program in 1914 exceeded only slightly those of the previous year.<sup>51</sup> Still, Daniels pared them down drastically to conform to the economies of the administration.<sup>52</sup> In the Board's considerations of the deficiencies in enlisted personnel strength, the Secretary refused to publish



the report until all specific references to the shortages were stricken from it.<sup>53</sup>

While a Literary Digest poll of newspaper editors revealed considerable support for increasing the armed forces,<sup>54</sup> it was weighted in favor of the seaboard states whose natural interest ran in that direction. Inland opinion, according to a contemporary poll conducted by the Columbus (Ohio) Citizen, showed popular sentiment on the side of the administration.<sup>55</sup>

#### The Great Preparedness Movement

In the winter of 1914-15 the movement for preparedness sponsored by private societies acting in all conceivable avenues began a great educational drive to bring Americans to the realization of the inadequacy of the nation's arms. Organizations such as the National Security League, the Army League, the Navy League, and the National Defense League began campaigns to agitate for greater preparedness on the part of the United States.<sup>56</sup>

For their parts, both the Army and the Navy contributed to the preparedness drive.<sup>57</sup> "...The Administration, reversing its earlier policy, came forward with a great armament program of its own and a supporting propaganda that equalled that of any pressure group in the field."<sup>58</sup>

Of the press activities of the Secretary of the Navy, little is written. Daniels did begin to hold twice-daily press conferences in his office for Washington newsmen. The beginning date of this procedure is uncertain. In addition, items of interest to newsmen during the period 1914-1917 were posted in the Navy Department. Normally, these notices were of a routine information nature and were titled, "Press Notices," or "Memorandum for the Press."<sup>59</sup> Many of the news releases<sup>60</sup> began, "Secretary Daniels has announced..." or, "The Secretary of the Navy has authorized the announcement of...", leaving little doubt as to the authority for the release of information in the Navy.

Several of the news releases provided verbatim transcripts of Daniels' speeches. But most noteworthy was the tempo and extent of the press release activity which picked up significantly in mid-1915 and continued to do so through to the end of the war.<sup>61</sup> This accent coincided roughly with the administration's decision to accelerate the strengthening of the nation's military forces.<sup>62</sup>

A statement made by Daniels during the Congressional Investigations of 1917 concerning the Navy's lack of readiness for war is revealing of the Navy Secretary's philosophy of the function of information

in government. Questioned whether the proceedings of the Committee should be made public, Daniels replied,

Yes, it conveys facts that I think people would like to know and facts that they properly should know. My feeling in this war is that it is our high duty to give out to public information concerning everything we are doing, omitting only what expert military opinion says should not be made public...That is a duty that we owe to the public and there are good reasons why we must give that information out. The public should know everything possible.<sup>63</sup>

The application of this philosophy remained to be questioned.

In the years just prior to U.S. entry into the great war, both the activities of preparedness groups and international developments dramatized by events of the war combined with public opinion to secure legislation supporting a record-breaking military establishment.<sup>64</sup> For the Navy, the appropriations act of 1916 served as a milestone in the development of a modern seagoing force worthy of the name. While the building program received the major share of publicity, there were other significant provisions: the enlargement of the office of the Chief of Naval Operations, authorization and funding for the creation of a naval flying corps, major increases in both officer and enlisted strengths, and the establishment of an elaborate reserve organization.<sup>65</sup> Within that

naval act was seen also an endorsement for the principle of disarmament -- a factor which would find larger significance after the war. Perhaps, most important, however, was the long-sought merging of foreign and military policy into an indefinable thing which could be called National Policy.<sup>66</sup>

#### Daniels Versus the Navy League

In August, 1917, a traditional tie was severed when Secretary Daniels issued the order,

Directions are hereby given that after this date no officer, agent or representative of the Navy League is to be admitted to any ship, naval station or any naval reservation unless specifically directed by the Secretary of the Navy. Officers and men are enjoined to receive nothing whatsoever from the Navy League.<sup>67</sup>

Daniels had long chafed under League criticism, but an accusation made by the League implying complicity with certain labor elements during an investigation of a navy yard explosion in Mare Island was enough to disrupt relations between the two totally.<sup>68</sup>

At stake was the vitality of the League itself. Though overtures were made by Robert M. Thompson, President of the League, the dissociation continued to the end of Daniels term.

#### The Last Days, Then War

Appropriations do not establish fighting fleets -- they just provide for them. The building of the

ships and the training of their crews take years. The Naval Act of 1916 gave recognition to the problem by establishing a five-year program for systematic development and training of naval personnel.<sup>69</sup>

In the critical field of personnel, the shortage which Secretary Daniels had denied existed in 1914 was partly compensated for in 1917 by an emergency personnel measure authorizing an increase of 6,500 men.<sup>70</sup>

Within hours after the President's signature, Daniels sent telegrams to more than a thousand newspapers in the United States asking them to print front-page notices of the Navy's need. According to Daniels, most of them wrote editorials as well.<sup>71</sup>

#### Appointment of Belknap

The accelerated pace of events involving the Navy in early 1917 worked a burden upon the information function. In February, the Army and Navy Journal noted,

The Secretary of the Navy has turned over to Lieutenant Charles Belknap, Jr., of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, the work of reviewing Navy Department advises and making public those which do not fall under the ban of military secrecy. The Secretary will continue his daily conferences with the press representatives. Lieutenant Belknap will aid the press, however, in obtaining quick action on questions that arise.<sup>72</sup>

From scattered entries in his diary, Daniels reveals that Belknap worked directly with the Secretary.<sup>73</sup>

In deed, if not in name, the Navy had appointed its first public affairs officer.

Jenkins and the Navy News Bureau

On April 17, 1917, eleven days after the United States had declared war, the Secretary of the Navy asked John Wilbur Jenkins<sup>74</sup> to come to Washington to take over the duties of Civilian Director of Information.<sup>75</sup> Jenkins took over his new duties just three days later.<sup>76</sup>

Within a few more days, the same arrangement was made with Marvin Hunter McIntyre, City Editor of the Washington Herald to become Jenkins' assistant.<sup>77</sup> Both Jenkins and McIntyre, though paid by and carried on the books of George Creel's Committee on Public Information, worked for the Navy and established the Navy News Bureau.<sup>78</sup> The Bureau was staffed by several newspapermen called to active duty.

Throughout the war Jenkins provided the principal liaison with the War and State Departments as well as with the Committee on Public Information. He kept the new organization small, believing that a large staff would serve only to inhibit the speedy relay and release of news.<sup>79</sup>

In the news releases there was little pattern in the subject matter to indicate what kinds of information released by the Navy were of interest to the

Committee.<sup>80</sup> In nearly all cases, the Committee left news and security judgments to the War and Navy Departments, providing only policy guidance. If there were problems in authority, they seem to have been solved between Daniels and Creel by private discussion.<sup>81</sup> As for President Wilson, his criticisms or suggestions concerning the release of Navy information were made directly to Daniels without reference to Creel or his Committee.<sup>82</sup>

The work of the Navy News Bureau during the war concentrated on news of the convoys and the anti-submarine operations -- the major naval activity. The Bureau also prepared and distributed transcripts of the Secretary's daily press conferences. In the main, the more important items were announced by Daniels in his twice-daily sessions.<sup>83</sup> With feature materials, stories were released in advance of publication time to allow the newspapers ample opportunity to set them in type. One series of features, prepared by Jenkins, contained biographical sketches of prominent naval officers and Navy Department bureau Chiefs.<sup>84</sup>

Coordination of the work of the News Bureau within the professional naval circles of the Navy Department was accomplished by Lieutenant Commander (formerly Lieutenant) Charles Belknap, Jr., working in the office of the Chief of Naval Operations.<sup>85</sup> Major

determinations concerning the release of information were subjects of discussion between the Secretary and Admiral William S. Benson, the Chief of Naval Operations,<sup>86</sup> although Belknap was often a party to the discussion. It was Daniels who made the ultimate decision.

#### At War's End

The termination of hostilities left the Navy News Bureau with a big job yet to be done -- the news of returning our forces from overseas. The organization had proved equal to the task of wartime demands. Few would criticize the work it had done.<sup>87</sup> Though the Creel Committee was disbanded without the recognition it had earned, the public affairs function in the Navy went on to build a yet more effective place in the military service.



<sup>1</sup>Messages and Papers of the Presidents (Washington D.C., Burlington National Literature) XV:7667. Hereafter cited as M&P, and Harold and Margaret Sprout, The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776-1918, (5th Ed.) (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966), 286-7, hereafter cited as Sprout, Rise.

<sup>2</sup>M&P, XV:7371-2 and Sprout, Rise, 288.

<sup>3</sup>E. B. Potter and Chester W. Nimitz, eds., Sea Power, a Naval History (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), 383. Hereafter cited as Potter and Nimitz, Sea Power.

<sup>4</sup>Sprout, Rise, 291 and Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Navy to the President of the United States, (various years), (1910,11), passim. Hereafter cited as Annual Reports of Secretary.

<sup>5</sup>Annual Reports of Secretary, (1911), 28-31 and Sprout, Rise, 291-2.

<sup>6</sup>Sprout, Rise, 292

<sup>7</sup>Armin Rappaport, The Navy League of the United States (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1962), 20. Hereafter cited as Rappaport, Navy League.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 25.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 26.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 27-8.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 29-30.

<sup>17</sup>In New York, for instance, support for the program was voiced by the Sun, American, Evening Journal, Times, and Herald. Only the small Navy World opposed.

<sup>18</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 30 and Sprout, Rise, 292

<sup>19</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 31-2 and Sprout, Rise, 294.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., Chapter 2

<sup>21</sup>Sprout, Rise, 294.

<sup>22</sup>For a discussion of the Navy and the spoilsmen, see, Sprout, Rise, passim. Increases in the domestic shore establishment to the detriment of developing overseas bases necessary to the Navy's new responsibilities in the Pacific and the Caribbean is obvious in this period, see, Ibid., 295-303.

<sup>23</sup>London Engineering, November 17, 1911.

<sup>24</sup>Correspondence concerning the article, subsequent investigation, and issuance of the General Order is contained in National Archives, Navy Department file, Office of the Secretary of the Navy RG 80, 27219-39 and 28019. Records in this group hereafter cited as Archives, Record Group (RG) 80.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 28019-18.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 28019-24.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., Secretary of Navy to Gardner dated February 1, 1912, file 28019.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 27416.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>It is noteworthy however that Daniels, as Editor of the News and Observer had demonstrated an interest in the Navy and had endorsed the naval programs of the Taft administration.

<sup>35</sup>Secretary of Navy memorandum 20400-46 of March 6, 1913. Contained in Records of the Office of information, Navy Department, Philibert Papers, op. cit.

<sup>36</sup>Secretary of Navy memorandum 20400-48 of April 17, 1913. Contained in Records of the Office of Information, Navy Department, Philibert Papers, op. cit

<sup>37</sup>Information leaks in the Navy Department were of concern to Daniels. One such, concerning deliberations of the Joint Board running counter to administration policies; is outlined in E. David Cronon, ed., The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, 1913-1921 (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1963), 66-68. Hereafter cited as Cronon, Diaries.

<sup>38</sup>Secretary of Navy memorandum 20400 of September 5, 1913. Contained in Records of the Office of information, Navy Department, Philibert Papers, op. cit..

<sup>39</sup>Banks' role in the public relations field remains unclear. It is not likely that Daniels provided the direction and that Banks did the leg work until 1917, when a more formal organization was established. For Banks connection with the Pan-Pacific Exposition see National Archives, Records of the Navy Department, Records relating to the Panama-Pacific Exposition, San Francisco, 1914-16, and Cronon, Diaries, 93.

<sup>40</sup>See, Wilson, History of the American People, War of 1812, quoted in Sprout, Rise.

<sup>41</sup>M&P, XVI:7906.

<sup>42</sup>Sprout, Rise, 308-9 and Annual Reports of Secretary, (1913), 9-11.

<sup>43</sup>For a discussion of these implications see, Sprout, Rise, 305-7, 310-12 and Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People (4th ed.) (New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1950), 610. Hereafter cited as Bailey, Diplomatic History.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Annual Reports of Secretary, (1913), 5-9, 11-16, 19-23, and Sprout, Rise, 309-10.

<sup>46</sup>Annual Reports of Secretary, (1913), 30-4 and Sprout, Rise, 309-10.

<sup>47</sup>Sprout, Rise, 310.

<sup>48</sup>Sprout, Rise, 310-11 and Chapter VI, conclusions.

<sup>49</sup>A. T. Mahan, Lessons of the War with Spain and Other Articles (Boston, Little Brown & Co., 1908), 10-11. A discussion of the importance of an informed citizenry upon national and naval strategies is contained in pp. 3-21.

<sup>50</sup>Cronon, Diaries, 6. The entry is just five days after Daniels took office. The Diaries, which lack the years 1914 and 1916 are laced with references to press queries, meetings, dinners, etc., but are not indexed in this area. It is obvious, however, that the press regarded Daniels as the official spokesman for the Navy.

<sup>51</sup>Annual Reports of Secretary (1914), 67.

<sup>52</sup>Sprout, Rise, 319.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Literary Digest, January 23, 1915, pp. 137-8, 162-9.

<sup>55</sup>Sprout, Rise, 321.

<sup>56</sup>For a detailed analysis of the part of the Navy League in the preparedness drive and the actions of the opponents to the League see, Rappaport, Navy League, 45-62. The effect of the movement on naval policy and appropriations is outlined in Sprout, Rise, 322-29. Reaction to the movement, from an administration man's point of view is contained in George Creel, Wilson and the Issues (New York, The Century Co., 1916), Chapter 5, 57-71.

<sup>57</sup>Sprout, Rise, 323-4

<sup>58</sup>Quoted from Sprout, Rise, 323. Contrast, for instance, Secretary Daniels' statements regarding fleet readiness in 1914 against those in 1915. Annual Reports of Secretary, (1914-15).

<sup>59</sup>A file of press releases (1914-1919) is contained in Archives, RG 80, Entry 113 (5 boxes).

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid. The themes of these releases, especially those providing verbatim transcripts of Daniels speeches, progressively dealt with naval readiness.

<sup>62</sup>Sprout, Rise, 332-4, and R. S. Baker, Woodrow Wilson, VI:8-9

<sup>63</sup>See subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs for Investigation of the Conduct and administration of Naval Affairs, December 19, 1917, House Document 26064-17, p. 13.

<sup>64</sup>Potter and Nimitz, Sea Power, 464-5.

<sup>65</sup>Sprout, Rise, 344-46 and Potter and Nimitz Sea Power, 464-5.

<sup>66</sup>Sprout, Rise, 346.

<sup>67</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 70; Cronon, Diaries, 191-2, 199 and Daniels, Wilson Era (1910-17), 340-42. Daniels account in the latter sets the date in 1915, which is incorrect.

<sup>68</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 70-77. The League, beginning with Daniels' first annual report in 1913, had criticized the Secretary in progressing degrees for his lack of positive action toward building up the Navy. See Rappaport, Navy League, 40

<sup>69</sup>The measure as adopted, collapsed the time to three years.

<sup>70</sup>Authorized by President Wilson, March 24, 1917.

<sup>71</sup>Daniels, Our Navy at War, 33-4.

<sup>72</sup>Army and Navy Journal, February 10, 1917, Vol. 54 p. 761:3

<sup>73</sup>And later, with John Wilbur Jenkins, Head of the Navy News Bureau. See, for instance, Cronin, Diaries, September 11, 1917, p. 204.

<sup>74</sup>Jenkins whose middle name is spelled variously Wilber and Wilbur, formerly was a correspondent on Daniels' News and Observer. At the time of his appointment, he was regarded as the Dean of the Baltimore Press Corps. See George Creel, How We Advertised America (New York, Harper and Brothers, 1920), 81.

<sup>75</sup>Henry H. Douglas, "Public Relations, United States Navy." U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, 67:10 ff. Jenkins has been described variously as, "literary

assistant," and "head of the Navy Public Relations Department." News releases of the period gave his title as "Manager, Navy News Bureau."

<sup>76</sup>Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid. McIntyre was later presidential press assistant for F. D. Roosevelt whom he had met as assistant Secretary of the Navy during his Navy association.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> National Archives, Records of the Navy Department, RG 80, Entry 113 contains release files 1914-1920. While the records are incomplete, news releases made during the war contain almost daily news releases. Some releases during this period bear the headline of the committee on Public Information, others the Navy News Bureau and still others from the Bureau of Navigation, Navy Department. These latter were confined almost exclusively to announcements regarding naval personnel. Important news of naval action during the war seems to have been handled by Daniels in his press conferences with back-up releases by the Committee on Public Information (in most instances) or the Navy News Bureau.

<sup>81</sup> Daniels' diaries contain multiple references to private discussions with Creel regarding subjects for public release.

<sup>82</sup> See, Cronon, Diaries, passim. Specifically the committee was composed of Creel, as Chairman, and the Secretaries of State, War and the Navy. In this study, however, reference is made to the Committee in its performance as a functioning body for the dissemination of information.

<sup>83</sup> Archives, RG 80, Entry 113 (April 1917 - November 1918).

<sup>84</sup> See, for instance, the biography on Admiral W. S. Sims from this series as it appeared in the New York Sun, June 8, 1917, P. 5. Filed Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> See, Cronon, Diaries, passim.

<sup>86</sup> Cronon, Diaries, passim.

<sup>87</sup> One criticism purporting suppression of news was laid upon the Navy and the Creel Committee over conflicting reports of submarine attacks against a U.S. convoy on July 4, 1917. Later evaluations tend to place the blame on the Associated Press. See, for instance, Walton E. Bean, "The Accuracy of Creel Committee News," Journalism Quarterly, 18:263-73

## CHAPTER IV

### At War's End: The Reorganization



## Chapter IV

War's end had produced a strange conflict of political ideologies and practical realities. President Wilson's objective in entering the war was to produce an enduring peace. Against this purpose were the hard facts of Japanese occupation of, and subsequent pre-eminence in the German holdings in the Western Pacific and Great Britain's sea dominance in Europe by virtue of the destruction of the German High Seas Fleet. To complicate the problem, political and military planners were confronted by rising expectations on the part of the American public for a lasting peace without armaments.<sup>1</sup>

Of lasting implication, too, was the astounding development in military and industrial technologies -- for the Navy, the portents of submarine and aerial warfare upon the current naval strategy.<sup>2</sup>

Noting the dramatic rise of both Great Britain and Japan as naval powers, and potentially naval rivals of the United States, naval planners in 1918 and 1919 advocated a return to battleship construction which had been held in abeyance during the war in favor of increased destroyer production to cope with the German submarine menace.<sup>3</sup> Continuation of the 1916 naval bill's construction rate would, by 1925, make the American Navy the equal of any in the world.<sup>4</sup>

In December, 1918, the proposals of the naval General Board received President Wilson's endorsement in his annual message to Congress. Secretary Daniels, as well, included support for the increased construction program in his annual report.<sup>5</sup> This advocacy, however, was seen in different perspective from that of the naval planners. The administration intended to use these proposals as an unsubtle influence for the European allies to conform to Wilsonian desires for the stabilization of world order and the reduction of armaments.<sup>6</sup> Six months later, Daniels appeared before the House Naval Affairs Committee to recommend abandonment of his previous proposal for a huge three-year building program, predicating the reversal on a renewed faith in the League of Nations.

The operations of the Navy News Bureau, meanwhile, had continued uninterrupted. In December, 1918, a fleet review in New York provided the Navy a fine opportunity to demonstrate its publicity operation.<sup>8</sup> Detailed advance planning; provisions for press, dignitary, and general ship visits; speeches and special events -- all were included in the pageantry. Advance features on the ships and their commanding officers, with the Bureau's imprimatur were issued to insure press interest in the event.<sup>9</sup> For John Wilbur Jenkins, it marked one

of his final projects with the Bureau. He was succeeded in April, 1919, by his assistant, Marvin McIntyre.<sup>10</sup> With the dissolution of the Committee on Public Information in June, 1919, McIntyre became formally an employee of the Navy Department.<sup>11</sup>

#### The Popular Revolt Against Navalism

Set against the accelerated building proposals of the Navy was the post-war tide of public opinion. Not only was the temper of American people to be measured in the nation's press,<sup>12</sup> but, perhaps more accurately, on the floor of the House in bitter debate over appropriations,<sup>13</sup> and in other indicators such as the rapid and drastic decline of interest in the Navy League.<sup>14</sup>

From its high-water mark of preparedness and war-time prosperity, the tide ebbed to low water--to post-war depression and abiding concern for the cost of armaments to keep the United States, unnecessarily in the view of many, on a par with Great Britain. When next the tide flowed, in 1920-21, it flowed with the strength of the peace movement, carrying upon its crest a popular fervor which washed across the nation, floating a platform which ended in the international limitation of arms conferences in Washington. Influential newspapers, peace societies, churches of all denominations,

women's groups, labor groups -- all had a voice in affixing their support for an international detente.<sup>15</sup> They had fought a war to end all wars!

#### The Internecine Naval War

In December, 1919, the Secretary of the Navy published a list of medal awards for wartime service as a part of his annual report.<sup>16</sup> On December 15, the Washington Post published a page one story bylined by Albert W. Fox suggesting that Congress investigate the discrepancy between the actual awards and those recommended by the Naval Awards Board.<sup>17</sup> On December 17, Admiral William S. Sims, the war's foremost naval commander and, then, President of the Naval War College, declined his medal. Sims' declination, for alleged injustices in the awards, precipitated a rash of similar refusals from deserving officers and, with it, a storm of controversy. The aftermath was a Congressional investigation.

The underground river which had been running at cross purposes to the Secretary came boiling to the surface. The question of just awards served to raise further and more fundamental inquiries into the administration of the Navy Department, questions which had been raised but not satisfactorily answered in the 1917 probes.<sup>18</sup> Included were the Navy's inability to

exercise military command through an effective Chief of Naval Operations, failure of the Department to make adequate preparations for war, preoccupation of the Secretary with trivia and politics to the disregard of strategic considerations, and, as well, the propaganda campaign of Daniels, his News Bureau and his technical Bureau Chiefs to convince the general public that the Navy had been prepared for war in all respects.<sup>19</sup>

The internal strife in the Navy Department was paraded before the Senate Naval Affairs sub-committee, whose Chairman, Senator Eugene Hale of Maine, took great care in cross examination to raise fully the points of relevance to future organization and operation of the Department.<sup>20</sup> Many of the Admirals who headed Bureaus in the Navy Department during the war, whose opening statements to the Committee were subject to Daniels' scrutiny, modified their positions during Hale's cross examination.<sup>21</sup>

As to the information aspects of Daniels' administration Kittredge felt compelled to write:

...(when the war came)...automatically the curtain was dropped, so far as the public was concerned, over the activities of the Navy Department. One of Mr. Daniels' first acts, on assuming office in 1913, had been to issue orders in the Navy Department that henceforth all public statements would be issued by his office. After war began, this order was more

rigidly enforced than ever before. The country knew only what Mr. Daniels wanted it to know of what was going on, --and surely Mr. Daniels was painting a picture roseate enough for even the most belligerent citizen. Day after day a flood of notices poured out from the Navy Department of all the things that the Navy had done, was doing and was going to do. From the day that we declared war one would have imagined, from Mr. Daniels' official statements, that the whole of the Navy at once, ipso facto, was transformed to a war basis...<sup>22</sup>

The vacillation of Secretary Daniels which had for so long festered in the breasts of many professional officers was recalled. The propaganda cover for the Navy's inadequate preparations had been an additional source of frustration for naval officers.<sup>23</sup>

The hearings themselves, according to Kittredge, were slanted in their press coverage by a Secretary who knew how to take advantage of the press operation.<sup>24</sup> In Sims' opening statement he noted Daniels' advantage, "In view of the public presentation of this case, which has resulted from no intent on my part, I am perhaps handicapped by lack of any connection with the press or experience in manipulating that important instrument of public opinion."<sup>25</sup> That lesson was not to be lost on the professional Navy which had heretofore shown ultraconservatism in public affairs.

Though rancor, dissension and recrimination characterized the hearings, a larger principle had been enunciated by Sims in his final conclusion of

lessons learned in the war,

The country must take a more active interest in the welfare of its first line of defense. It must insist on having full and correct reports of the condition of the Navy. It must demand and exact a full responsibility from the officials entrusted with the direction and administration of the Navy. Naval officers should be permitted a greater liberty of expression in order that the repetition of such a demoralizing tyranny as that of Mr. Daniels may be prevented.<sup>26</sup>

The pronouncement made a good case for an open public affairs function in the Navy.

Daniels, in a term longer than any Secretary before him, had made many reforms in the service. Not all were popular, nor were all necessarily good. He had instituted a formal organization for the dissemination of news; however, the control he exercised over that operation was not above criticism. Within his tenure, the United States Navy had grown to a second rank among the world's naval powers -- though many events propelled the development in spite of the Secretary rather than because of him. Nonetheless, the information bureau created by Daniels was to continue on unbroken to the present day, largely through the efforts of subsequent civilian and naval leaders who saw, in the function, a basic responsibility to the general public.

Harding and Disarmament<sup>27</sup>

President Harding entered the White House on March 4, 1921, with public commitments to undertake steps toward international agreements in limitations of armaments. In early April, his special message to Congress reflected this philosophy in a call for a reduction in defense expenditures.<sup>28</sup> On April 20, however, the administration disclosed its opposition to curtailment of the building program authorized in 1916. The apparent procrastination caused an immediate reaction in the disarmament movement, the proponents of which resumed their publicity campaigns.<sup>29</sup>

Noting the disparity between preparedness and disarmament news coverage, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. recommended to Navy Secretary Edwin Denby in March that the Navy undertake a program to select and send newspaper correspondents to a special course at the Naval War College.<sup>30</sup> The purpose of the proposal was to increase the newsmen's understanding of the Navy. The recommendation was forwarded to the General Board by Denby for further consideration. In April, the Board recommended<sup>31</sup> that the War College institute such a program noting additionally,



...The war and movies and the Recruiting Service with its publicity bureau have done much to bring the Navy prominently before the people. But the Navy Department needs the active and continuous aid of the American press through the agencies of the Sunday paper and the illustrated popular weeklies to furnish serious information as to broad policies in an interesting manner to combat the efforts being made to reduce and even dispense with the Navy. Popular articles by naval officers on live topics would also be of value.

Though the problem was addressed from the lack of a broad base of information, no mention was made of the then functioning Navy News Bureau which continued its operation until September, 1921, when it became the Navy Press Room. A lack of funds had forced abandonment of the War College plan.<sup>32</sup> It was also a funding problem which had forced a curtailment of the News Bureau's operation and staff.<sup>33</sup>

In September, the name Navy News Bureau was changed to Navy Press Room,<sup>34</sup> and a Naval Reserve Lieutenant Commander, Wells Hawks, became the Information Officer of the Navy.<sup>35</sup> He was also the information staff.

#### The Washington Naval Conference

On November 12, 1921, the naval limitation of arms conference convened in Washington. In a dramatic and calculated announcement Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes proposed not only the disarmament plans for the United States, but offered commensurate

measures for the other naval powers as well.<sup>36</sup> In a stroke, the leadership for the disarmament movement had been placed in the hands of the administration.<sup>37</sup> Popular enthusiasm and support for the American proposal swept the United States.<sup>38</sup>

The chief architect for the proposal in this fashion had been Hughes. He was ably assisted on the technical details by just three men in the Navy Department--Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt, the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Robert E. Coontz, and his assistant, Captain William V. Pratt.<sup>39</sup>

Coming as it did as a complete surprise, information regarding the proposal of the United States was at a premium. The details, together with their ramifications for other navies, were supplied mainly by Secretary of the Navy Denby in his daily press conferences.<sup>40</sup> It was no mean task. Several hundred journalists representing both the U.S. and foreign press were on hand for the conferences.<sup>41</sup> This method for the release of information directly from the primary source was continued throughout the conference.

#### The Fight for Naval Aviation

During this same period, with public sentiment running high in support of limitations of armaments, the Director of the War Plans Division within the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations addressed a

memorandum in January, 1922, to the Chief of Naval Operations recommending the establishment of a Press Relations office.<sup>42</sup> The purpose of the office, as envisioned, would be fourfold:

To furnish correct information; to actively and definitely contradict incorrect public statements; to familiarize the people of the United States with the work and needs of the naval service, (and) to promote interest in the Navy.

The rationale supporting the recommendation continued, "...it is but necessary to refer to the recent bombing tests to show the power of propaganda and the weakness of the lack of propaganda."

The Office of Naval Intelligence concurred in the recommendation, which proposed location of the press relations office within Naval Intelligence, and added, "...information that is inconsistent or antagonistic to the policy or views of the Department would...be more harmful than no publicity at all... the closest liaison would be necessary between the publicity office and the head of the Navy Department."<sup>43</sup> The recommendation smacked of policy control for other than military security. However, the endorsement for an office of press relations included the suggestion for ordering an officer

...of special talent, rank and experience to Operations to act as publicity officer... where he would maintain close contact with the Secretary of the Navy, Chief of Naval Operations, Office of Naval Intelligence and the Bureaus and be responsible for all information and news releases.<sup>44</sup>

Considerations of aviation and its effects on naval strategy had been of concern in the Navy Department for several years. In its recommendations for construction in 1918, the General Board had requested an aircraft carrier, envisioning the advantages of airpower as an adjunct to fleet operations.<sup>45</sup> In 1919, provision was made for an air arm and permission granted by Congress on a proposal for conversion of a collier to a primitive aircraft carrier.<sup>46</sup> In 1920, the Board proposed to construct four large, high speed carriers in a three-year building program.<sup>47</sup>

While the propaganda activities of General William Mitchell captured the popular imagination<sup>48</sup> and headlines, advocates of air power within the Navy were less vocal in their criticisms of the conservative elements within their service which inhibited aviation's progress. The Navy was sensitive to Mitchell's activities. During the fall, 1919, hearings conducted by the House Military Affairs Committee on a separate air service, Secretary of the Navy Daniels sent a letter to the Committee

Chairman asking that the Navy Department be given ample opportunity to present its views. He included a copy of a letter he had sent to Secretary of War Baker refuting in laborious detail many of the statements made by Mitchell. The whole package was the subject of a six-page news release distributed by the Navy News Bureau.<sup>49</sup>

As noted above, a press relations office had been recommended, partially, it would seem, to fight the public battle over air power. Following the bombing tests made against target ships and the sinking of the "impregnable" Ostfriesland in the Spring and Summer of 1921, the press had heralded the doom of the battleship. The event forced upon naval planners a painful reevaluation of naval strategy, a process all too reluctantly undertaken by many senior officers.<sup>50</sup> Counter-propaganda was not the answer, although it made sense why the proposals for a press relations office contained, in a period of deep doctrinal controversy, provisions for policy guidance. It was also at this time that the Arms Conference, in December, recommended statutes imposing limitations on construction of aircraft carriers.

#### Information Under Intelligence

By February, 1922, the decision upon previous recommendations had been reached. The information function in the Navy was placed under Naval Intelligence.<sup>51</sup>

1. In order to supply general Navy information constantly requested from various societies and newspapers throughout the United States, an information section has been established under the Office of Naval Intelligence.
2. In order not to increase overhead expenses the work of this section will be delegated to the various Bureaus and Offices under the general supervision of the Director of Naval Intelligence. This delegation of special work for the present will be as follows:
  - (a) Daily press handled by the Aide to the Secretary and an officer of the Information Section.
  - (b) General Navy information to be collected and mailed as routine to such societies or papers requesting it. This work is to be handled by the Morale Division in Navigation.<sup>52</sup>
  - (c) Information on specific subjects as requested. This work to be handled by Morale Division in Navigation.
  - (d) Pictures. This work to be handled by the photographic section of the Bureau of Aeronautics.
3. The Director of Naval Intelligence in addition to supervising the work enumerated above will lend his assistance to individual writers on naval subjects and naval stories, in order that facts given may be correct.
4. All Bureaus are requested to lend full assistance in providing accurate naval information not considered as confidential.
5. No policies shall be enunciated by any of the agencies mentioned. The Secretary determines and announces policies.
6. No statements derogatory to, or critical of, other branches of government shall be issued.

/s/ Edwin Denby

In March, 1922, Denby directed the Bureaus and Offices of the Navy Department to detail an officer and necessary clerical assistance to assist the Information Section. "Officers so designated will meet at such times and places as the Secretary may direct."<sup>53</sup> On the first of May, a similar letter was sent to Fleet Commanders, District Commandants, and to Commanders of overseas stations directing them to appoint an officer to collect information and photographs from ships and stations under their respective commands and forward them weekly to the Office of Naval Intelligence.<sup>54</sup> For the first time, the information network had been spread throughout the military chain of command of the Navy.

The first head of the Information Section was Commander Ralph A. Koch, who assumed his duties in February.<sup>54A</sup> At Koch's suggestion, two lieutenants, John B. Heffernan and W. F. Dietrich, were appointed as assistants. The precepts of the Information Section's operations with the press were to provide complete and factual answers to press queries. There was little activity in the initiation of press releases, but those that were provided were distributed to all on a strictly equal basis. The major portion of the news came from Secretary Denby himself who was available to press representatives every afternoon, or in

the mornings by appointment. Liaison was maintained with the Secretary by Koch, who also maintained close contact with the publicity bureau in New York.<sup>55</sup>

### Repairing the Rift

By the fall of 1921 when the Limitation of Arms Conference was convening, the Navy League of the United States had become all but defunct.<sup>56</sup> Desperately, its leadership held on to see what results the Conference would have upon the United States Navy. They were appalled at Conference's end in February, but determined then more than ever to find an active role in building up the Navy.<sup>57</sup>

To maintain the sea forces at full treaty strength became the League's objective. Powerful peace groups were on hand in Washington to urge further cuts in military appropriations.<sup>58</sup> When the General Board recommended personnel strength below the level necessary to man a treaty-strength fleet and Secretary Denby further pared the figure in an economy move, the issue was drawn -- the Navy League had a worthy cause.<sup>59</sup> A further cut by the Naval Affairs Committee brought an eventual compromise figure between that body and Denby which was far below fleet requirements. Though the League was highly reluctant to accept this figure as being in the best interests of the Navy, the



realization that Congress would probably approve none greater and reassurances from the Secretary that it represented a temporary expedient, the League closed ranks behind the Secretary -- aware that internal dissension at this critical period would dismember any effort at concerted action.<sup>60</sup>

The League embarked immediately upon an educational campaign reminiscent of its operations of old -- publicity and editorial suggestions to newspapers, letters to the full membership urging them to exert influence upon their Congressmen, literature to influentials and legislators. -- all aimed at securing passage of the bill over opposition moving for increased appropriation cuts. The manpower bill did pass, although an estimate of the League's influence cannot be made.<sup>61</sup> The small but loyal membership had returned to a program of action.

In August, 1922, according to Navy League historian Armin Rappaport, the president of the League sounded out the Navy Department on a proposal for the establishment of an annual day "on which the people of the country would be reminded, through the concerted efforts of numerous patriotic organizations, of the Navy and its value to them."<sup>62</sup> The project was approved by then Acting Secretary Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., and the cooperation of the Navy assured by a directive issued to all ships and stations.<sup>63</sup> The date of

October 27 was selected, being the birthday of Theodore Roosevelt and the reported anniversary date of the submission of the first naval bill, and preparations for the celebration got underway with the blessings of Denby and Roosevelt.<sup>64</sup> The enmity between the League and the Navy Department which had come in the Daniels administration was thus healed and both the Department and the League could look forward to further cooperation such as was demonstrated in the League's first official Navy Day in 1922.<sup>65</sup>

In fact, cooperation with the League in 1923 became firm.

The connection between League and Navy proceeded directly from the society's headquarters to the Navy Secretary's office. The connection...was constant and continuous. The League's secretary, president and individual directors solicited advice, accepted suggestions, submitted releases for approval prior to publication, and generally kept in close touch with the Department.<sup>66</sup>

#### Press Relations

In February, 1923, a year after incorporation of the information function within naval intelligence, Denby issued a directive throughout the naval service pointing out the principles of the Department's concern for continued active operations with the press:<sup>67</sup>

1. It is the right of the Congress and the

people of the United States to be fully informed concerning the ships, men and operation of the Navy.

2. The press of the country is the most important vehicle by which information can be disseminated. It is interested in placing before its readers through news columns and editorial comment, the condition of the Navy and the operation of its ships. It is, therefore, of importance to the country and to the Navy, that the press should be placed in possession of all facts in connection with the service except such as are military secrets.

3. It is directed that all commandants of Naval Districts, Navy yards and naval stations and Flag officers, recruiting officers, and officers on detached duty, take steps to establish and maintain cordial relationships with the press of their localities and to keep in mind the Department's policy and guide themselves accordingly.

4. The Director of Naval Intelligence has been instructed to cooperate with the various offices concerned and to furnish them with such information and suggestions as he may feel will further this object.

5. The Commander-in-Chief, Commanders of Forces and squadrons and commandants of naval districts will take appropriate steps to bring these instructions to the attention of all officers and men under their command.

/s/ EDWIN DENBY"

Despite the increased emphasis by the Secretary, another proposal by Assistant Secretary Roosevelt for a course of instruction for selected press representatives at the Naval War College met with failure again in 1923 through lack of funds.<sup>68</sup>

In the winter of 1923-24, Denby found a new method for acquainting members of the press with naval operations - embarkation with the fleet during maneuvers.<sup>69</sup> It was a program independent of funding restrictions. A press party of eighty-five editors and publishers embarked in fleet units during annual maneuvers in the Carribbean. Following the cruise, the newsmen wired their appreciation to the Secretary:

The memories of this delightful voyage from Charleston to Culebra are indelible. It marks a contact between our Navy and representatives of the press which we believe to be of marked mutual advantage. Every guest on this ship has already a clear conception of what our Navy is doing and what it stands for, and will be able to present our Navy's mission to the public in a more intelligent and broader way. We hope that this beneficent educational process will continue.<sup>70</sup>

The event was worthwhile for the Navy. It enabled the service to reach a receptive audience with a message<sup>71</sup> and to demonstrate its points as well. The program appears to have been continued until 1936 when the problem of security forced a limitation on guests to include only wire service representatives who were also officers in the Naval Reserve.<sup>72</sup> During this period, the program was enlarged to include prominent civilian guests as well as press representatives.<sup>73</sup> On the 1927 cruise, arrangements were made for the

first time for news of the fleet to be sent by wireless during battle maneuvers.<sup>74</sup> The officer who made the arrangements, Robert B. Carney, was later to become Chief of Naval Operations.

#### Organizational Development

On March, 1924, Secretary of the Navy Curtis D. Wilbur succeeded Denby.<sup>75</sup> The change in administration appeared to have little effect on the development of the information function throughout the naval service. A letter to all ships and stations in August, 1924, emphasized the importance of officers appointed to information duties being relieved by other officers when detached to insure continuity of the information input to the Information Section.<sup>76</sup> Secretary Wilbur at this time was conducting press conferences in the Navy Department twice daily, at 10 a.m. and at 4 p.m..<sup>77</sup> An additional reminder was sent also to the Bureaus of the Department to stimulate the information input available for the Secretary's use.<sup>78</sup>

Assistance promised to outlying commands in the Secretary's letter of February, 1923, urging increased efforts in press relations<sup>79</sup> came forth, first in 1924, in a seven-lesson study course on news handling issued by the Bureau of Navigation,<sup>80</sup> and, later, in a compendium issued by the Information Section,

Office of Naval Intelligence, in 1925, detailing the current status of United States and foreign navies in relation to each other and to authorized treaty strengths.<sup>81</sup>

In February, 1926, the Office of Naval Intelligence took preliminary steps toward organizing a special group of volunteer reserve intelligence officers. Intelligence officers in naval districts were requested to submit a list of qualified individuals, "preferably key people in the news and writing world, who in time of peace can be of value in keeping in touch with this office and, in time of national emergency, can be actively coordinated with the duties of Naval Intelligence in this particular section as part of war plans."<sup>82</sup> Thus was begun the selection of a nucleus force for later augmentation of the information function.<sup>83</sup> The organization chart for the Information Section of 1926 showed billets for one captain, as branch head, one commander, six lieutenant commanders and thirteen lieutenants.<sup>84</sup> Only three officers manned the section and did the work,<sup>85</sup> but there was obviously room to grow.

#### The Tide of Events

With the presidency of Calvin C. Coolidge, the attitude of the administration tended to center on

domestic prosperity and to withdraw from armament proposals to keep the United States Navy at full strength allowed under the agreements of the Washington Conference.<sup>86</sup> With Japan and Great Britain building ships in the unlimited classes of cruisers and auxiliaries, a move to reach agreement on further limitations became especially strong in the United States.<sup>87</sup> Consideration of another conference was a source of consternation to naval planners and navalphiles alike, for agreements in tonnage ratios were based on actual levels afloat, building or funded.<sup>88</sup> In this category, a fleet in being or in the making, the United States was especially weak. Yet, there was no indication that the administration would consider any but the most restrictive of building measures prior to entering another limitation agreement for fear of jeopardizing a spirit of international conciliation.

Measures proposed by the General Board to bring the battleship fleet to treaty levels and to increase cruiser tonnage to a parity with Great Britain failed to receive the support of the administration and of the Congress.<sup>90</sup> In February, 1927, when Coolidge proposed the Geneva Conference, the Navy was faced with the reality that it had not even been able to obtain appropriations to begin work on the last three

of eight cruisers authorized in the appropriations act of 1924.<sup>91</sup> The postwar mood of the American people simply did not support continued spending upon armaments when the possibility of international agreements might serve a better purpose.<sup>92</sup> The machinations of Japan in the Pacific did not seem to alter the mood, nor did the intransigence of Italy or France in proceeding upon their own courses and refusing to attend the conference.<sup>93</sup>

#### From Within the Navy

Noting the apathy of the general public for the subject of adequate armaments, a rash of articles appeared in the professional journals during the period 1924-1930 -- each proposing new or better ways to influence, educate or indoctrinate the general public on the needs of the service and its importance to the national defense.<sup>94</sup> At least some segment of professional opinion had taken cognizance of the problem. One writer commented:

...The Navy Department usually manages to hold up its end of (the government's) vast system of collecting and releasing news to the press, but in other sections of the country the Navy's publicity scheme is either non-existent or woefully inadequate.

There are feelings within the Navy that the country has deserted it...The country has not deserted the Navy; the Navy has not made itself an integral part of the country. It has not succeeded in making itself part and parcel of



the national life; it has not become real in the minds of millions of Americans.

...Such a failure can only be attributed to the lack of effective and sustained publicity, the lack of organization, facilities, and equipment for the gathering and dissemination of service news to the newspapers and public of the nation.<sup>95</sup>

In commenting on organization, the author paid tribute to the Army's information system and proposed that the Navy follow suit by establishing an effective nation-wide information network. That author was Hanson Baldwin, later to become military editor of the New York Times. His comments indicated that the information function in the Navy had a far piece yet to go.

<sup>1</sup> For a description of post-war conditions in the United States, especially as they affected naval policy see, Harold and Margaret Sprout, The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776-1918, Chapter 19, and Harold and Margaret Sprout, Toward a New Order of Sea Power (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1940), Chapters 4, 7, hereafter cited as Sprout, New Order. See also Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People, (4th ed.) (New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1950), Chapter 34, hereafter cited as Bailey, Diplomatic History; Tracy B. Kittredge, Naval Lessons of the Great War (New York, Doubleday, Page & Co., 1921), Chapter 23, hereafter cited as Kittredge, Naval Lessons.

<sup>2</sup> Sprout, New Order, 47-9

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 54-73.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>5</sup> Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Navy to the President of the United States, (various years), (1918). Hereafter cited as Annual Reports of Secretary.

<sup>6</sup> Sprout, New Order, 59-60.

<sup>7</sup> Armin Rappaport, The Navy League of the United States (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1962), 80. Hereafter cited as Rappaport, Navy League.

<sup>8</sup> See project folder, National Archives, files of the Office of the Secretary of the Navy, RG 80, Entry 113, box 1 of 5.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., and attendant press coverage in New York papers, December 26, 1918.

<sup>10</sup> List of naval officers and civilians who have served as Director of Public Relations, unserialized letter in records of the Office of Information, Navy Department Records, Office of Naval History. Filed in Philibert Papers. Hereafter cited as Navy Records, Naval History.

<sup>11</sup> Henry H. Douglas, "Public Relations, United States Navy," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, 72:1432 (1941). Hereafter cited as Douglas, Public Relations.

<sup>12</sup> For a survey of press opinion in early 1919 see, Literary Digest, 60: 11 ff.

<sup>13</sup> Sprout, New Order, 106-14. The House Naval Affairs Committee made drastic cuts in the proposal which was again cut on the floor and passed only after heated debate. An attempt to restore some of the funds was killed in the Senate by a filibuster.

<sup>14</sup> Rappaport, Navy League, 77-8.

<sup>15</sup> Sprout, New Order, 116.

<sup>16</sup> Annual Reports of Secretary, (1919).

<sup>17</sup> E. David Cronon, ed., The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, 1913-1921 (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1963), 470 ff. Hereafter cited as Cronon, Diaries.

<sup>18</sup> The most complete and interesting account of the investigation, although biased in favor of Sims, is T. B. Kittredge, Naval Lessons of the Great War. Kittredge, a naval correspondent for the Providence Journal, was a Naval Reserve Lieutenant on Sims' intelligence and historical staff in London. His book, which grew out of preparations for the Committee Hearings, is valuable for its operational viewpoint, having served on the active end of the war away from Washington officialdom.

<sup>19</sup> For a discussion of the import of these and related questions see, Julius Augustus Furer, RADM, USN (Ret.), Administration of the Navy Department in World War II, Chapters 1-3, passim; Charles D. Paullin, "Naval Administration 1775-1911," Naval Institute Proceedings, collection of articles 1906-14; Dudley W. Knox, Commodore, USN (Ret.) A History of the United States Navy (New York, Putnam's, 1948), passim; and L. Robert Davids, "There Was Not Always a CNO," Shipmate, September - October, 1967, pp. 7-11.

<sup>20</sup> Kittredge, Naval Lessons, passim.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 28-9 and passim. Navy Department press releases during this period are contained in Files of Secretary.

<sup>23</sup> B. A. Fiske, From Midshipman to Rear Admiral (New York, The Century Company, 1919) passim.

<sup>24</sup> Kittredge, Naval Lessons, Chapter 4 and passim, and Cronon, Diaries, 470 ff.

<sup>25</sup> Kittredge, Naval Lessons, 103.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 458. Franklin D. Roosevelt, then Assistant Secretary of Navy had substantiated some of Sims' criticisms of Daniels' administration in a speech in Brooklyn February 1, 1920. See Cronon, Diaries, 420 ff.

<sup>27</sup> The term disarmament represents somewhat of a misnomer in that proposals under consideration did not involve a stripping or complete scrapping of arms, but, rather, constituted plans for an international parity formula based on present arms levels and limitations upon future building programs.

<sup>28</sup> Sprout, New Order, 122. The internal and international factors influencing the decision to propose the Washington Limitation of Arms Conference are outlined admirably in Ibid., Chapter 8. A primary consideration was American public opinion.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 123 ff.

<sup>30</sup> Assistant Secretary of Navy memo to Secretary of Navy of March 28, 1921. National Archives, op. cit., RG 80, 3809--976.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., General Board letter No. 441 of April 18, 1921.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Douglas, Public Relations.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., and Secretary of Navy memorandum to all Navy Department Bureaus and Offices of September 12, 1921.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., and interview September 1, 1967 with Miss Helene Philibert, long associated with the information branch of the Office of Naval Intelligence and later with the Office of Public Relations. Hawks, it is reported, had been recalled to active duty during the war, had experience as a circus press agent, and had worked in the publicity bureau of Navy recruiting in New York.

<sup>36</sup> Sprout, New Order, 149-57. A concise summary of conference proposals and ultimate agreements is contained in E. B. Potter and Chester W. Nimitz, eds., Sea Power, A Naval History (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), 480-83. Hereafter cited as Potter and Nimitz, Sea Power.

<sup>37</sup> Sprout, New Order, Chapter 9.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 157-60.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 146 ff.

<sup>40</sup> See transcripts of the press conferences of the Secretary of the Navy, January - December, 1921, Philibert Papers, Box 154.

<sup>41</sup> Sprout, New Order, 149-50.

<sup>42</sup> Director, War Plans Division memorandum to the Chief of Naval Operations of January 12, 1922; National Archives, op. cit., 3809--976:6

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. Office of Naval Intelligence memorandum to the Chief of Naval Operations of January 14, 1922.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Sprout, New Order, 226. Provision for a naval air corps had been made in the 1916 appropriation bill.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., and Annual Reports of Secretary, (1919), pp. 57, 550.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., and Annual Reports of Secretary, (1920), 215-6.

<sup>48</sup> For an account of General Mitchell's fight to develop military aviation see, I. D. Levine, Mitchell, Pioneer of Air Power (New York, Duell, Sloan & Pearce, Inc., 1943)

<sup>49</sup> See, Navy News Bureau release, December 19, 1919. Filed in Philibert Papers, separate air service. According to Daniels' diary, he saw Secretary Baker on the subject on the same day, December 19.

<sup>50</sup> Sprout, New Order, p.v..

<sup>51</sup> Secretary of Navy directive to all Bureaus and Offices of the Navy Department, Subject: Navy Department Information Section under Office of Naval Intelligence, dated February 21, 1922, National Archives, op.cit, RG 80, 28642 -- 49. Paragraphs five and six of the letter press rough draft appear to have been added by Secretary of the Navy Denby, firmly placing policy decisions in his hands alone. Also contained in edited form in Philibert Papers.

<sup>52</sup>Also under the Morale Division were the publicity bureaus of Navy recruiting.

<sup>53</sup>Secretary of Navy letter to all Bureaus and Offices of March 1, 1922. Filed, National Archives, op. cit., 28642--49.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid. Secretary of Navy letter op 16 Ser 7734 dated May 1, 1922.

<sup>54A</sup>Ibid. Interview with Admiral (Ret.) John B. Heffernan conducted August 29, 1967. See also Navy Records Naval History, List of naval officers and civilians.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid. Although there was no formal link, the New York publicity office served as a convenient contact point through which information was funneled. It had been used in this manner for many years. See, for instance, Cronon, Diaries, passim.

<sup>56</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 77-82.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 83-90.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 85-6.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 91.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid..

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 91-2.

<sup>62</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 93. Admiral Heffernan recalls that the project was proposed by Koch, who suggested the idea to Assistant Secretary Roosevelt, Heffernan Interviews, op. cit.. Author J. Russell Carney maintains the idea for a national Navy Day originated with Mrs. William H. Hamilton, founder of the Manhattan Navy Club, who suggested its implementation to Roosevelt, Naval Institute Proceedings, 65:1441.

<sup>63</sup>Secretary of Navy letter to all ships and stations, dated September 12, 1922, National Archives, op. cit., RG 80, 3809, 1124.

<sup>64</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 93.

<sup>65</sup>For a description of the success of the event see Rappaport, Navy League, 93-4.

<sup>66</sup> Rappaport, Navy League, 97. According to Admiral Heffernan, this relationship did not involve the Information Section. Intercourse with the Navy League was handled entirely by the Secretary himself, Heffernan Interview, op. cit.

<sup>67</sup> Secretary of Navy letter to the naval service dated February 3, 1923, Philibert Papers, op. cit.

<sup>68</sup> Chief, Bureau of Navigation letter to Assistant Secretary of the Navy of May 7, 1923. National Archives, RG 80, 3809:976:23, op. cit.

<sup>69</sup> Although no records have been found of the planning for this event, details are available in a letter to a prospective guest in the following year. See Secretary of Navy letter to Karl A. Bickel, United Press of January 10, 1925, Philibert Papers, op cit.

<sup>70</sup> Quoted from Ibid..

<sup>71</sup> Frank Schofield, "The Aims and Present Status of the Navy," paper prepared...to be read to owners and editors of the press visiting the fleet at Culebra, February, 1924, 17 pages, mimeo, Wisconsin Historical Library, Madison, Wisconsin.

<sup>72</sup> Details of the various cruises and their arrangements are contained in, Philibert Papers, op. cit., box 154, "Fleet Maneuvers, 1927-36." The various cruises were: 1924--Hampton Roads to Culebra; 1925-- San Francisco to Hawaii; 1926--no records; 1927--New York to Narragansett Bay; 1928--San Francisco to Hawaii; 1929--San Pedro to Panama; 1930--Hampton Roads to Guantanamo Bay and, in 1931, a press flight in the Akron, a Navy dirigible. Personal invitations were sent by the Secretary of the Navy to each prospective guest. Operational arrangements with the fleet were made by the Information Section, Office of Naval Intelligence.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., passim.

<sup>74</sup> LCDR Robert S. Jones, "Recommendations for Navy Public Relations Based on Civilian Studies," unpublished Masters' theses, Boston University, 1958, pp. 23-24. Based on interview with Admiral Carney, 1953, quoted therein.

<sup>75</sup> Denby resigned over the teapot dome scandals to prevent the embarrassment of President Calvin C. Coolidge. Coolidge had succeeded Harding on August 2, 1923 when the President died in San Francisco while on a speaking tour.

<sup>76</sup> Chief of Naval Operations letter to all ships and stations, August 22, 1924, National Archives, op. cit., RG 80, 28642-49.

<sup>77</sup> Untitled outline of the functions of the Information Section, Philibert Papers, op. cit.. See also, Chief of Naval Operations memorandum of August 27, 1924, subject: Press Releases. File, Ibid..

<sup>78</sup> Office of Naval Operations memo dated August 27, 1924, to all Bureaus and Offices. National Archives, op. cit., RG 80, 28642-49:4.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Wallace S. Wharton, Lieutenant (Junior Grade), U.S. Naval Reserve Force, News Handling, Washington, Navy Department, GPO, 1924. Contained in Philibert Papers, Box 155.

<sup>81</sup> Information Concerning the U.S. Navy and other Navies: Information and Tables Compiled to Answer Popular Inquiry, Washington, Navy Department, GPO, 1925, 257 pp.

<sup>82</sup> See, for instance, Commandant, Twelfth Naval District, History of World War II, unpublished narrative, Vol. II, 956. Office of Naval Histories, Navy Department, rare manuscripts. Authority for augmentation of the naval reserve was provided by Public Law #512, 68th Congress, 1st session passed February 28, 1925. It was implemented by the Navy on July 1, 1925. Within this implementation was a special group of intelligence reserve volunteers available for "specialist duty," designated I-V(S). Those intended for use in information duties were included in this group. See, Harold T. Weiland, History of the Development of the U.S. Naval Reserve: 1889-1941, unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1950.

<sup>83</sup> Heffernan Interview, op. cit..

<sup>84</sup> Untitled outline of the functions of the Information section, op. cit. Heffernan Interview, op. cit..

<sup>85</sup> Heffernan Interview, op. cit.

<sup>86</sup> For discussions of policies of the Coolidge administration as they effected naval policy see, Rappaport, Navy League, 101-22; Bailey, Diplomatic History, Chapter 22.



Potter and Nimitz, Sea Power, 483-4; "A History of the Committee on Naval Affairs of the House of Representatives," House Document 81266--46--No. 287, December 27, 1946, pp. 3865-74 and Annual Reports of Secretary, (1924-1928).

<sup>87</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 102.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 103.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., 102-6.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 105-6.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 107-8.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., 98-100; and Bailey, Diplomatic History, 700-14.

<sup>94</sup>See, for instance, United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vols. 49-56 (1923-30), entries under publicity, passim.

<sup>95</sup>Lieutenant (Junior Grade) Hanson W. Baldwin, USNR, "Newspapers and the Navy," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, 55:1069 ff.

## CHAPTER V

Talk of Peace and Organization  
for War

## Chapter V

The failure of the Conference for the Limitation of Naval Armaments which met in Geneva from June 20 to August 4, 1927, served as a transition point for national military strategy and for popular opinion.<sup>1</sup> As the Conference wore on, Americans became increasingly disillusioned with the failure to reach an accord over the question of limitation of cruiser tonnage.<sup>2</sup> In fact, many Americans came to adopt the theory that the United States could better bring about an agreement by building a Navy great enough to force accord, or at least, by building as many cruisers as our defense needs required.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, President Coolidge himself seemed to be influenced in that direction when in his annual message to Congress in December, 1927, he said, "Where there is no treaty limitation, the size of the Navy which America is to have will be solely for America to determine."<sup>4</sup> The Department's recommendations for new construction in that same month reflected that thought and included twenty-five cruisers, five aircraft carriers, nine destroyers and thirty-two submarines, all to begin building within five years.

Collaterally, a significant movement was beginning for an international accord in the outlawry of war.<sup>5</sup> On April 6, 1927, French Foreign Minister Briand had proposed that France and the United States enter into

a bilateral agreement renouncing war as an instrument of national policy. The proposal captured the popular imagination and gathered momentum through the support of various peace groups and contingents within the press and Congress. In December, the United States amplified the proposal, suggesting the agreement be expanded to include the other powers.<sup>6</sup>

The negotiations leading to the formulation of the pact were duly publicized in an effort to answer criticisms before they were raised.<sup>7</sup> The Pact of Paris (more commonly called the Kellogg-Briand Agreement) was signed on August 27, 1928 by representatives of the United States and fourteen other powers. The treaty was eventually approved by almost all nations although Great Britain made certain reservations regarding the defense of her overseas empire.<sup>8</sup>

Though the Kellogg-Briand Pact had no power of enforcement and allowed "defensive war," public support for this instrument of peace was rekindled in the United States.<sup>9</sup> From 1928-1931, Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg supplemented this peace machinery with a series of eighteen bilateral arbitration treaties with non-American nations.<sup>10</sup>

The Naval Appropriations Bill, meanwhile, emerged from the Naval Affairs Committee cut to fifteen cruisers

and one carrier. It passed the House after heated debate in March, 1928, but died when the Senate adjourned on May 29, without considering it-- a victim, it was believed, of the popular antagonism against military spending.<sup>12</sup> The bill awaited the next session of Congress and was passed by the Senate in February, 1929 -- in the same session considering, paradoxically, the Kellogg-Briand Pact.<sup>13</sup> In the last days of the Coolidge administration, the Navy had obtained a small portion of the ships thought by the Navy to be required by the international situation, but fleet levels remained far below authorized treaty strength. With the advent of the Hoover administration prospects foretold that they were quite likely to remain so.<sup>14</sup>

#### The Hoover Administration

Herbert Hoover succeeded to the presidency deeply disturbed over Anglo-American relations, which had deteriorated -- largely over naval competition in cruiser construction.<sup>15</sup> The president lost no time in setting the diplomatic wheels in motion. In June, 1929, Ambassador Charles G. Dawes arrived in London and, two days later, began discussions with Prime Minister Ramsey MacDonald on many problems, including naval limitation. By July, MacDonald had reported to the House of Commons on the satisfactory results from the conferences and

recommended consideration of the deletion of five ships from the current construction program.<sup>16</sup> On the same day, Hoover announced suspension of planned construction on three cruisers.<sup>17</sup> In October MacDonald arrived in the United States for an eleven-day stay and met with Hoover, where plans were laid to convene another Limitation of Arms Conference in London in January, 1930.<sup>18</sup>

At the Conference, attended by representatives of the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan, work began to complete the job undertaken in Washington eight years earlier. The delegates addressed themselves to the cruiser problem and ratios in auxiliaries and submarines.<sup>19</sup> After a great deal of maneuvering on technical issues, an agreement was reached in April. Though all powers signed the document, France and Italy subscribed to only relatively unimportant clauses.<sup>20</sup>

The Conference succeeded in fixing the upper limits in all categories of ships, thus tightening a gap left open in the Washington Treaty. British and American navies were granted parity in all ship types, while the Japanese, who retained the 10-10-6 ratio in capital ships, obtained a greater share in getting an increase to 10-10-7 in light cruisers and other auxiliaries.<sup>21</sup>

The results of the Conference, though disappointing to many peace advocates, left much room for expansion of the United States fleet to parity with Great Britain within the upper tonnage limitation. With the financial crisis which had been visited on the United States with the collapse of the stock market in October, 1929, however, such a building program was unlikely to be proposed by the Hoover administration.<sup>22</sup>

#### The Development of Information Policy

Noting the lack of results of servicewide information programs, not so much at the departmental level but throughout the lower echelons of command, the Director of Naval Intelligence, in March, 1930, wrote the commandants of the geographically divided naval districts emphasizing again the importance of good press relations.<sup>23</sup> Enclosed with the letter was a guide to the conduct of effective press relations which provided, as a keynote, a statement of Navy policy enunciated by Secretary of the Navy Wilbur on October 6, 1928:

...to furnish the public with full information on the Navy not incompatible with military secrecy, including its activities at home and abroad, its educational features, and its contributions to science and industry...

It included, as well, a corollary to that policy:

...it follows that reasonable effort should be made to correct the impressions made by published misstatements or misrepresentation of facts (not opinions) concerning the Navy and naval activities. Unless steps are taken to do this the reading public will be deceived and much or little harm will result, according to the gravity of the errors published and the extent to which they are circulated.<sup>25</sup>

The basic letter concluded with a request that commandants forward an analysis of operations with the press within their respective commands, "in order that a study of methods and results may be made and published ...for the general guidance of the service."<sup>26</sup>

Secretary of the Navy, Charles F. Adams, followed up on the Director of Naval Intelligence's letter by issuing, on November 17, 1930, a directive outlining the duties of the Information Section.<sup>27</sup> Cancelling all previous information instructions, the instruction established formal procedures as well as outlined information policy:

2. The Information Section, Office of Naval Intelligence, is the Navy Department's central agency for supplying to the public full information of the Navy not incompatible with military secrecy.

3. This work is accomplished by means of press relations; by cooperation with radio broadcasting agencies, motion picture, photographic and news reel companies; and by complying with requests made for general information about the Navy.



4. The Information Section is governed by the following approved principles, applicable throughout the Navy Department.

(a) to avoid any discrimination in dissemination of news.

(b) to issue no statements derogatory to, or critical of, other branches of the government.

(c) Neither to enunciate nor to comment upon policies.

5. The Secretary of the Navy determines policies, and when these are to be made public, they normally shall be announced at daily press conferences which are arranged for by the Aide to the Secretary assisted by an officer from the Information Section.

6. Questions involving the supply of naval information to the public that concern the press, photographic agencies, sound and news reel companies, moving picture companies and broadcasting companies, when received in any of the offices of the Navy Department will be referred to the Office of Naval Intelligence, Information Section...That office will then consult with the responsible offices concerned, do preliminary work that may be necessary in arranging for representatives of the above agencies to witness naval activities, notify all parties interested and handle the required correspondence, always acting in accordance with the policy of the Navy Department.

7. All bureaus and offices in the Navy Department will cooperate with the Information Section in the accomplishment of these duties, and each bureau and office concerned will designate an officer with necessary clerical assistance to supply the Information Section with such data as may be requested, with news items of general interest for press releases, and with suitable illustrations when available.

Included as an enclosure to the letter was the same guide to effective press relations which had been circulated by the Director of Naval Intelligence.

The following day, the Chief of Naval Operations forwarded the Secretary's letter throughout the naval operating commands, "for the information and guidance of the naval service."<sup>28</sup>

A memorandum from the Director of the Information Section to the Director of Naval Intelligence indicated in December that a survey of all naval districts had revealed that the Navy Department system was in effect and that all districts had reported satisfactory relations with the press.<sup>29</sup> The survey was taken to assess the servicewide diffusion of information policies and came on the heels of Hanson Baldwin's criticisms.

#### Special Events

In January, 1929, the aircraft carriers Lexington and Saratoga participated for the first time in the attack phase of a fleet exercise, simulating an attack on the Panama Canal.<sup>30</sup> So impressive was the performance of their aircraft that the 1930 maneuvers were scheduled to employ again, for the first time, a tactical unit built around the carriers.

As a part of the 1930 maneuvers, the carriers conducted a special demonstration for interested members

of Congress and for the press.<sup>31</sup> A special press party was embarked in the Lexington to insure adequate and complete coverage. Due to space limitations, the representatives of the media drew lots to make an arrangement for pooling their material.<sup>32</sup> The seventeen members of the press party were: four from press associations, three representing still picture services, three from the silent news reels and seven for sound news reels. Multiple representation was included to allow complete coverage from several vantage points, some of the representatives spread between a photographic aircraft during aerial maneuvers, on board the Lexington, and on board the Aroostook which maneuvered to a position close aboard the carrier during the flight demonstrations. Additionally, a special representative of Western Union was embarked to take the press files back to Hampton Roads immediately upon completion of the demonstration. A special communication circuit was held in readiness for the transmission of press traffic should that be required.<sup>33</sup>

The news coverage of this event was but a prelude for what was to follow. On May 7, 1930, one hundred twenty-five planes from the carriers Saratoga, Lexington and Langley began a three-day exhibition tour, flying

from Hampton Roads to New York and then on to Providence, Rhode Island, Boston and Lowell, Massachusetts and Hartford, Connecticut. On their return flight, the torpedo, bomber, fighter and scout planes flew over Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington and Norfolk.<sup>34</sup>

Accompanying these flying reviews were representatives of the press, who had, again, made pool arrangements for coverage from a special aircraft.<sup>35</sup> The two demonstrations, those flown from the carrier and the touring flying reviews, were staged, interestingly enough, just a few days following the signing of the London Naval Treaty on April 22, 1930.

#### Further Demise

The remainder of the Hoover administration brought no encouragement to the advocates of preparedness. In 1931, with Japan but only 5,728 tons below treaty allowances and Great Britain 20,874 tons below, the United States deficiency amounted to 153,698 tons. Needed to attain treaty strength, according to the United States Navy League, were: four carriers, three large and seven small-gun cruisers, twenty-five submarines and over 100 destroyers.<sup>36</sup> The administration's proposals for that year were: one aircraft carrier, two six-inch (small-gun) cruisers, four submarines and eleven destroyers. Even that conservative proposal

failed to get action as the Congress adjourned in May without entering the bill on its legislative calendar.<sup>37</sup>

Neither the Congress nor the President, it would seem, had any inclination to maintain the fleet at or near treaty strength. In September, Hoover announced a drastic cut in the naval building program for 1931-32 and its elimination in 1932-33 in the name of world harmony and domestic economy.<sup>37</sup> The Navy's leadership, under Secretary Charles F. Adams and Admiral William V. Pratt, showed little inclination to challenge the chief executive's policies or directions.<sup>38</sup>

In the Far East, in Manchuria in 1931 and in Shanghai in 1932, signs of future trouble for the United States had begun to appear. The hope of a just and true peace through international conciliation appeared to be progressively dimming.

#### Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Navy

The inauguration of Franklin D. Roosevelt brought to the White House a man who knew a great deal about the Navy. He had served for seven years as Assistant Secretary to Josephus Daniels, spanning the period prior to and during World War I. The domestic economy which President Roosevelt inherited was far from recovery.<sup>39</sup> At the outset, it looked as though domestic considerations would influence a continuance of Hoover's

disarmament policies.<sup>40</sup>

A plan for warship construction was, however, included in the President's program for increased public works. On June 16, Roosevelt signed Executive Order 6174 which allocated \$283 million of Public Works Administration appropriations for the construction of thirty-two warships over a three-year period.<sup>41</sup>

#### Internal Preoccupation

The situations and events leading to international conflict and world war are known widely and need not be explored in this study. Among them: the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, the invasion of Shanghai in 1932, Adolph Hitler's succession to Chancellor of Germany in 1933, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, German occupation of the Rhineland and the beginning of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, the Japanese invasion of China in 1937, the Munich agreements over Czechoslovakia in 1938, and the climactic events leading to war in Europe in 1939.

The failure of conciliation undertaken by the League of Nations<sup>42</sup> infected popular opinion in the United States with the desire to remain neutral and avoid involvements in both Europe and the Far East. Reflective of these opinions were the legislative acts programming Philippine independence (1934) and

the progressive neutrality acts of 1935-7.<sup>43</sup> Pre-occupation with internal affairs was a characteristic of the time -- not only in the United States but in other nations of the world as well.<sup>44</sup> Divergent national courses were bound for collision.<sup>45</sup>

#### Armaments and Talk of Disarmament

Through the leadership of the President and Carl Vinson, Chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee, mustering the support of the administration forces in the House, the Vinson-Trammel Act was passed in March, 1934. The bill provided authorization for construction to bring the United States Navy up to full treaty strength -- the first comprehensive measure for ship construction since World War I. Unfortunately, the authorization did not gain appropriations to implement it.<sup>46</sup>

Under a provision of the Washington Naval Conference, the second London Naval Conference met in late 1935 with little hope of success. The Japanese, who demanded but did not receive full parity in ship tonnage, withdrew from the discussions. Although an agreement was reached and a treaty signed in March, 1936, it was an instrument watered with escape clauses which held little meaning in light of the nonadherence of both Italy and Japan.<sup>47</sup>

President Roosevelt concluded that it was unwise to fall behind in a rapidly rearming world and, in January, 1938, proposed to Congress a \$1 billion naval appropriation. Known as the Second Vinson Act, the bill authorizing an increase in total tonnage of under-age naval vessels amounting to forty thousand tons for aircraft carriers and authorizing three thousand aircraft, was passed in May.<sup>48</sup> Rearmament was under way.

#### Development of the Public Affairs Function

From a standpoint of public interest in and concern for the national security and military and naval policy, the early and mid-1930's provided little opportunity for development of the public affairs function. Refinement and codification of public relations policies and procedures, however, continued.

In 1932, the Navy Department issued a comprehensive set of instructions governing Navy cooperation with producers in the production of motion picture "plays."<sup>49</sup> The following March, Secretary of the Navy Claude A. Swanson<sup>50</sup> issued a directive to all ships and stations detailing specific information which could be released concerning Navy ships under the Washington and London treaties and specifically restricting the release of information of a technical nature.<sup>51</sup>

In 1935, the Department issued a General Order emphasizing the care which should be taken by officers



writing on professional subjects.<sup>52</sup> The order noted that the Department would maintain no censorship on discussions or articles but cautioned, "unrestricted utterance or publication of fact and opinion may divulge information which it is not advisable to make public, and may constitute an offense against military discipline..." While a veiled threat, it was a notable improvement over the repressive General Order 139 issued by Secretary Meyer in 1911.

In August, Secretary Swanson reemphasized the manner in which he intended information to be made public in a memorandum to all bureaus and offices of the Navy Department:<sup>53</sup>

The Public Relations Branch<sup>54</sup> of the Office of Naval Intelligence has been asked by newspapermen from time to time to corroborate items of indisputable Navy Department origin that have appeared in the press but which have not been cleared through its press section.

Instances have occurred where a reporter was refused information by the Public Relations Branch on the advice of the bureau or office concerned and subsequently an opposition paper obtained the information by establishing contact directly with an officer or employee of the bureau or office.

Such departures from the regular procedure, while seldom serious in themselves, tend to compromise the Navy Department's machinery for the simultaneous and impartial distribution of public information concerning the Navy Department and the naval service.

In order to preserve a strict impartiality and uniform treatment toward all correspondents, to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort, to obviate confusion, to relieve all bureaus and

offices of the annoyance of importunate queries and to insure the simultaneous release of officially visaed information to the public, all heads of bureaus and offices will take steps to insure that information suitable for publication is normally cleared through the Public Relations Branch (Press Section) of the Office of Naval Intelligence.

To this end, officers of the several bureaus and activities of the Navy Department designated as liaison officers with the Navy Department Public Relations Branch will maintain close contact with the Press Section and furnish such items as are suitable for publication. Where circumstances make a departure from this procedure advisable the responsible official who releases information to a reporter or special writer should communicate to the Public Relations Branch the substance of his remarks.

/s/ Claude A. Swanson

Again in November, 1938, Secretary Swanson found it necessary to reemphasize the instructions<sup>55</sup> because, "the...(instructions are) not in all cases being observed. It is directed that...(they) be brought to the attention of and strictly complied with by officers and civil employees of bureaus and offices of the Navy Department." The occasion for this emphasis, according to B. L. Austin, then a Lieutenant Commander in charge of the Press Section, was the multiplicity of news leaks throughout the Department.<sup>56</sup> Various stringers for the news media working in the bureaus and offices were circumventing the news release policy. Admiral William D. Leahy, Chief of Naval Operations, insisted that the leaks be plugged and the central source of

news become, and remain, the Press Section.<sup>57</sup>

The work accomplished by the Public Relations Branch is well summarized by the following excerpts from its annual report, July 1, 1938, to June 30, 1939:<sup>58</sup>

Close liaison is continually maintained by the Public Relations officer with the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations in order to keep his (sic) office properly informed on all phases of policy.

...During the past fiscal year 900 formal releases of important news were made to the press. This compares with 550 such releases for last year (1938). These releases vary in length from 1 to 49 pages each. One hundred and fifty copies of each release are made available to the press at the Navy Department Press Room and at the National Press Club, and 30 copies are distributed for information within the Navy Department. The number of informal releases of information of interest to special groups is indeterminate, but is estimated to have increased during the year in about the same ratio as the formal releases. The Public Relations officer and the Press officer are available night and day, seven days a week, to answer queries of the press which have noticeably increased in number with the mounting tension in international affairs and consequent increase of public interest in national defense...

The Public Relations officer and the Press officer attend all White House press conferences and inform the interested senior officers and the Secretary of any discussions of service interest. We also watch the ticker tape, newspapers and magazines and inform responsible senior officers promptly of pertinent bulletins and articles...

...Biographies have been prepared and filed of all senior officers who have figured in press releases or for which specific requests have been received...

...Speeches and articles by naval officers containing data on current naval topics are

mimeographed and distributed to the public upon request...material and assistance furnished officers in preparation for speeches...arrangements are made for speakers before patriotic societies and similar organizations...including radio broadcasts...

...Arrangements are made for cooperation with broadcasting companies, including all major networks, in presentation of programs of factual naval interest.

...Arrangements are made for accredited press representatives and photographers to take passage in naval vessels to cover specific naval activities when requested and deemed to be of paramount interest. The coverage of Cruiser Division Seven's South American good will cruise is one... illustration.

...Cooperation with all major newsreel companies in arranging for filming current naval activities of public interest.

...During the past year this office has answered approximately 6,000 letters in reply to queries for factual information from colleges, schools, individuals, societies, libraries, newspapers, magazines, writers, etc. Many of these requests require considerable research work...number of mimeograph stencils out - 2,092. Number of sheets of mimeograph paper used - 495,600.

...Photographs have been supplied to newspapers, magazines, organizations, and, in some cases, feature writers, when requested and when impracticable to obtain them from other sources.

...This office arranges for still and motion picture companies to photograph naval subjects. U.S. Navy Photographer's identification cards were issued to ninety accredited photographers operating in the Severn and Potomac areas this year.

...Cooperation with motion pictures - the Public Relations officer is a member of the Navy Department Motion Picture Board. He assists in reviewing and censoring of motion picture scenarios in which naval cooperation has been requested...of the

seventeen motion picture scenarios submitted to the Motion Picture Board,...five have been approved...two completed...and three are... in production.

...In addition to his usual activities, the officer in charge of this branch is Secretary of the Navy Department Navy Day Committee. Ground work for the celebration of Navy Day, October 27, is usually started in June. This office cooperates with the Navy League, the Naval Reserve and patriotic organizations in promoting the success of Navy Day. Seventeen articles and speeches, bearing on the subject of the Navy were distributed to the naval service as basic material for press and speeches on Navy Day...

...During the President's cruise in the Houston, August 1938, this office was designated by the White House to handle news releases concerning the cruise...<sup>59</sup>

The staff required to produce this work was eight: Commander Leland P. Lovette, Officer-in-Charge; Lieutenant Commander B. L. Austin, Assistant for Press Relations; Lieutenant W. G. Beecher, Jr., Assistant for Photography; two civilian assistants, Miss Helen Philibert for the Press Room and Miss Alice Costello, for the Public Relations Branch, plus two stenographers and a Marine orderly.<sup>60</sup>

Two stories, mentioned only in the annual report as outstanding events, yielded further insight into the operations of the Public Relations Branch -- the fleet visit to New York in May, 1939, and the loss of the submarine Squalus in that same month.

During May, 6-16, a special contingent of the Atlantic Fleet arrived in New York for the opening of the World's Fair.<sup>61</sup> During its stay, over a half million visitors went aboard fleet units. Special groups of visitors, among them 100 publishers from the Newspaper Editors and Publishers Association then holding a convention in New York, over three hundred working press representatives visiting individually and in groups and five hundred Children of the American Revolution. Arrangements were coordinated by Austin and Miss Philibert from Washington and Lieutenant H. W. Gordon and two yeomen from the New York publicity office. Letters of tribute and appreciation for the outstanding arrangements were received from many guests: Kenneth Hogate, president of the Wall Street Journal; Edward Bartlett, city editor of the New York Sun and many others including Edward L. Bernays and T. J. Ross, prominent public relations counselors. New York Times military editor, Hanson Baldwin, commented, "...I think you did a swell job up here under considerable difficulties and that the Navy Department deserves commendation for sending you...it was a real help to us of the press and establishes a precedent which should be followed, in my opinion, in all such future fleet visits to New York..."<sup>62</sup>

On May 23, 1939, the submarine Squalus was lost on a practice dive off Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Fifty-nine of her crew were saved in rescue operations; twenty-six perished. On a previous submarine accident with the S-4, members of the press had received no cooperation from the Navy, and had hired a tug to get to the scene where they were greeted with fire hoses turning them away from coverage of the salvage operations. Determined to provide full information in the Squalus disaster, Austin went directly to Admiral Leahy and received full authority to arrange complete press coverage. A special telegraph circuit was installed in the press room in the Navy Department to facilitate direct communications with the recovery forces and special fleet units shuttled press representatives to and from the scene.<sup>63</sup> The sympathetic coverage obtained was brought about by a significant departure from policies at similar disasters in the past.<sup>64</sup>

The last of the pre-war training instructions under Naval Intelligence, a 300-page manual consisting of monographs dealing with various aspects of public relations organization and practice, was issued in the summer 1939.<sup>65</sup> On the first of September, war began in Europe when Germany invaded Poland.

Following declaration of war by Great Britain

and France upon Germany on September 3, the United States proclaimed its neutrality on the 5th. On the next day a United States naval patrol was established in the Atlantic and Caribbean to observe the movements of belligerent ships. On September 8, President Roosevelt declared a limited national emergency, ordering an increase in the strength of all military forces -- one of many measures which followed in rapid order attempting to put the United States on a war footing.

In January, 1940, Charles Edison assumed the duties of Secretary of the Navy, a post vacated by the death on July 7, 1939, of Claude Swanson. Edison, in turn, was succeeded by Frank Knox on July 11, 1940, after the former had resigned in June.

#### The Mobilization of Public Relations<sup>66</sup>

In July, 1940, the Public Relations Branch of the Division of Naval Intelligence was staffed by thirteen personnel: the officer-in-charge; three officers and an experienced civilian assistant in the press section; one officer and an assistant who handled general information requests, pictorial and radio duties; plus four clerical personnel and two Marine orderlies.

Commander H. R. Thurber became Officer-in-Charge on July 16. His first orders were to "build up the office for an emergency."<sup>67</sup> Records of Naval Reserves slated for war-time duty in public relations were



reviewed and tentative selections were made of individuals who might head the individual sections of an expanded office. War plans, written in 1924 and revised through 1939, were reviewed and modified as necessary. Although there was no legal requirement for reserve officers to enter onto active duty in 1940,<sup>68</sup> selected individuals were interviewed and asked to come on active service if their personal situations would permit.

Plans for the expansion envisioned a director, an assistant director, and operational sections to include: administration, plans, press, radio, pictorial, scripts, civic liaison and naval districts, and a reference section.

In 1940, three officers reported as section heads: Lieutenant (Junior Grade), Victor F. Blakeslee, USN, (Retired), in August, to head the scripts section which was charged with preparation of speeches for high-ranking civilian officials and officers of the Navy Department and, as well, with assistance to writers and publishers; Lieutenant Commander W. M. Galvin, U.S. Naval Reserve, in September, former Secretary of the Navy League, to head the plans section; and Lieutenant Commander E. John Long, U.S. Naval Reserve, formerly on the executive staff of National Geographic magazine, in December, to take control of the pictorial

section which was, at that time, issuing approximately seven thousand photographs per year.

In February, 1941, two more officers assumed duties as section chiefs: Lieutenant Commander James G. Stahlman, U.S. Naval Reserve who had volunteered for the duty, formerly editor and publisher of the Nashville (Tennessee)Banner, to assume control of the civic liaison and naval districts section; and Lieutenant Commander Norvelle W. Sharpe, U.S. Naval Reserve, former independent radio consultant, to head the radio section. Lieutenant Commander, W. S. Wharton, U.S. Naval Reserve, formerly of the editorial staff of the Oregon Journal, reported a short time later and became the head of the press section in September, relieving Lieutenant Commander R. W. Berry, U.S. Navy, who had acted, as well, as the branch's Assistant Director.

One of the primary jobs in reorganization was undertaken by Stahlman who made a tour of the naval districts to evaluate the effectiveness and needs of the servicewide information organization.

#### Positive Steps

In March, 1941, the office of the Chief of Naval Operations issued a directive throughout the naval service outlining the proper function of public relations, declaring it a function of command and emphasizing,

"...it is not the function of Navy officers to endeavor to police or otherwise monitor publications, radio stations, or other media of information. It is the function of Navy officers to keep the public informed of the activities of the Navy, as compatible with military security."<sup>69</sup>

Two days later, the office of the Chief of Naval Operations issued a directive to the commandants of all naval districts which, effectively, insured the development of a public relations organization throughout the shore establishment:<sup>70</sup>

...it is the function of naval command to give prompt and careful attention to the legitimate requirements of public dissemination agencies. In the Navy Department, this is accomplished through the Public Relations Branch which is a subdivision of Naval Intelligence. In each naval district, this shall be accomplished through a Public Relations Branch, adequately manned and equipped.

The commandant of each naval district will survey the public relations requirements of his district...cognizance should be taken of the advisability of placing or designating a public relations officer in each state, or in each large publishing center, or in each zone where there is an important naval activity.

Requests for additional personnel and equipment for district public relations will be submitted not later than April 10, 1941.

The directive included a sixteen-page guide outlining the basis of a public relations program by which the commandants could assess their needs.

### Establishment of the Office of Public Relations

In April, Secretary Frank Knox formally removed the public affairs function in the Navy from within the Office of Naval Intelligence and placed it directly under his own control.<sup>71</sup>

1. The Office of Public Relations is established as of 1 May 1941 as an independent office directly under the Secretary of the Navy, and it will have the same functions and responsibilities as those of the present Public Relations Branch of the Division of Naval Intelligence. The head of the office will carry the title of Director of Public Relations.
2. The personnel, furnishings, and equipment of the present Public Relations Branch of the Division of Naval Intelligence will be transferred to the newly created office of public relations.
3. All correspondence of the new office will form a part of the Secretary's files and will bear the office originating symbol OOR. Correspondence antedating 1 May 1941 will remain a part of the files of the Division of Naval Intelligence.

Thus had the function returned to the Office of the Secretary, where first it was formally established.

On May 1, 1941, the Office of Public Relations began operations. Acting as its head until the May 27 arrival of Admiral Arthur J. Hepburn was Commander H. R. Thurber. On that date, the personnel of the Office of Public Relations numbered fifty-five. Another thirty-eight were on the way.

In April, arrangements had been made to have

Lieutenant Commander Waldo F. Drake, U.S. Naval Reserve, formerly on the staff of the Los Angeles Times, ordered to the staff of the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet as Fleet Public Relations Officer and Lieutenant Commander S. B. Wright, U.S. Naval Reserve, formerly of Paramount News, as Fleet Public Relations Officer for the Atlantic Fleet.

On May 9, following the creation of the Office of Public Relations under the Secretary, the Chief of Naval Operations directed naval district commandants to transfer their public relations offices from the cognizance of Naval Intelligence to a separate status directly under the commandant's control.<sup>72</sup> The framework for the new organization, by now, was complete.

The public affairs function which had begun informally at the inception of the Navy, followed a tempestuous path. It now faced its greatest challenge. In his address to the first assemblage of public relations officers in July, 1941, Secretary Knox sounded the keynote for future public affairs operations:

...May I try to impress upon you...how vitally important it is that we do get...(naval affairs) into current discussion and reading, because, after all, we are not going to have much trouble whatever in getting the necessary appropriations for the enlargement of our naval strength, because right now we have a popular fear to support us. The time will come when those fears will subside, but yet

it will be just exactly as acutely necessary for our future safety and security that the sea-power and air-power that we are now building up shall be retained against a future danger as it is that we shall build it up in the first place, and if we are going to have that kind of popular support for an adequate Navy in the future -- when our present alarm shall have subsided and our fears gone by -- then we must take advantage of this time when the people are interested in the Navy to make them so thoroughly Navy-minded that when the time comes for pruning expenditures and cutting down expenses there shall always be present in the minds of the people as an automatic reflex that if we want to be safe, we have got to be strong on the high seas.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of the international and national events which effected national and naval policy between 1927 and 1941 see Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People, (4th ed.) (New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1950), Chapters 42-45; Hereafter cited as Bailey, Diplomatic History; Julius August Furer, Rear Admiral, USN (Ret.), Administration of the Navy Department in World War II (Washington, Navy Department, 1959), 56-87, 94-100, and passim; Armin Rappaport, The Navy League of the United States (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1962), Chapters 6-8, hereafter cited as Rappaport, Navy League; Clark R. Mollenhoff, The Pentagon (New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1967) Chapters 4-5; E. B. Potter and Chester W. Nimitz, eds., Sea Power, A Naval History (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), 483-551, hereafter cited as Potter and Nimitz, Sea Power.

<sup>2</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 110-12.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Bailey, Diplomatic History, 707-9.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>See Kellogg statement, Bailey, Diplomatic History, 708n.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 709.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 116. This represented a considerable reduction to the President's proposals for 25 cruisers, 5 aircraft carriers, 9 destroyers and 32 submarines.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 116-7.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 117-22.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 123 and Bailey, Diplomatic History, 718.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 124.

<sup>16</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 124.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Bailey, Diplomatic History, 718-9.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 719-20.

<sup>23</sup>Director of Naval Intelligence letter to commandants of naval districts; Op-16-F, Serial A8-3/A7-1, dated March 15, 1930. Records of the Office of Public Relations, Navy Department; Office of Naval History, Philibert Papers, file: Public Relations Policy, 1930-40. Hereafter cited as Philibert Papers.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., enclosure (a), p. 1.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., enclosure (a), p.3.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., enclosure (a), p.3.

<sup>27</sup>Secretary of the Navy letter to all bureaus and offices, Serial EN3(13)/A3-1(1)(301117) dated November 17, 1930, Subject: Information Section, Office of Naval Intelligence -- duties of, and assistance to be given to.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., Chief of Naval Operations letter dated November 18, 1930.

<sup>29</sup>Memorandum for the Director of Naval Intelligence from the Director of the Information Section, Serial Op-16-F dated December 16, 1930. Philibert Papers, op. cit..

<sup>30</sup>See, Lieutenant Commander David M. Cooney, A Chronology of the U.S. Navy (New York, Franklin Watts, Inc., 1965). The two carriers built on cruiser hulls, had been commissioned a little over a year before. Some perspective of time required for construction and fitting out can be gained in the realization that Congress had authorized the conversion on July 1, 1922.



<sup>31</sup>For details of the arrangements see, Chief of Naval Operations letter to Commandant, 5th Naval District, C.O., USS Lexington and C.O., USS Aroostook, Op-16-F dated April 22, 1930, Subject: USS Lexington press and photographic arrangements for exhibition flights for Congressional party--April 26, 1930, with enclosures. Philibert Papers, op. cit..

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., enclosures (B) and (C). This represents the first incidence noted in this study of the formal limitation of press coverage and formation of a pooling arrangement.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>For details of this aerial demonstration see, Navy Press Room Release dated May 2, 1930.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., copies of pooling agreements attached. An interesting sidelight is found in the signatories to these agreements: representing Pathe News was Stephen T. Early and, Paramount News, Marvin H. McIntyre. Both were later to serve on President Franklin D. Roosevelt's public relations staff. McIntyre, it will be remembered, previously had served as manager of the Navy News Bureau during the period when F. D. Roosevelt was Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

<sup>36</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 135-36. The effects upon naval strategy of large versus small-gun cruisers is contained in Harold and Margaret Sprout, Toward a New Order of Sea Power (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1940), 212 ff.

<sup>37</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 142.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., Chapter 7, passim.

<sup>39</sup>Bailey, Diplomatic History, 732.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Rappaport, Navy League, 157-8

<sup>42</sup>While recognized as an oversimplification, it is nonetheless valuable for its impact upon the peace movement in the United States which propounded the virtues of disarmament. See, Stephen S. Goodspeed, The Nature and Function of International Organization (New York, Oxford University Press, 1959) Chapters 2 and 3; and

Inis L. Claude, Jr., Swords Into Plowshares (New York, Random House, 1961 (rev. ed.)), Chapters 2,3; also valuable is William L. Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich (New York, Simon & Schuster, 1959), Chapters 5,7,9,17.

<sup>43</sup>Bailey, Diplomatic History, Chapter 44.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., and Goodspeed, International Organization, op. cit., Chapter 44.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Bailey, Diplomatic History, 742 and Rappaport, Navy League, 165-6, and "History of the Naval Affairs Committee," op. cit., 3871.

<sup>47</sup>Bailey, Diplomatic History, 743, and Rappaport, Navy League, 171-2.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Chief of Naval Operations letter to Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Fleet, commandants all naval districts and bureaus and offices, Navy Department; Op-138, Serial A7-4(320805) dated August 10, 1932 with enclosure, "Policy of the Navy Department concerning cooperation in production of commercial motion picture plays." Philibert Papers, op.cit..

<sup>50</sup>Secretary of the Navy Swanson had succeeded Charles F. Adams on March 4, 1933.

<sup>51</sup>Secretary of the Navy letter to all ships and stations, Subject: Policy with respect to publicity regarding naval vessels, Op-138, Serial FS/A7-1 (330116) dated March 9, 1933. Philibert Papers, op.cit..

<sup>52</sup>General Order No. 9 of May 13, 1935.

<sup>53</sup>Secretary of the Navy memorandum to all bureaus and offices; Subject: Centralization of Public Information, Serial A7-1(350801) dated August 1, 1935. Philibert Papers, op. cit..

<sup>54</sup>

This is the first incidence uncovered in primary source materials indicating a change in title of the former Information Section, Office of Naval Intelligence. While there are several internal memoranda referring to it generally as "public relations" throughout the period 1932-35, no retitling document has been found.

<sup>55</sup> See Secretary of the Navy letter to the chiefs of all bureaus and offices, Subject: Centralization of Public Information, Serial A7-1(350801) dated November 10, 1938. Philibert Papers, op. cit..

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Admiral B. L. Austin, USN (Ret.) conducted August 29, 1967. Hereafter cited as Austin Interview.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Memorandum from Officer-in-Charge, Public Relations Branch to Director of Naval Intelligence dated June 29, 1939. Philibert Papers, op cit..

<sup>59</sup> During the Roosevelt administration, it was common for the President's press secretary to work directly with the service information organizations. Austin Interview, op. cit..

<sup>60</sup> Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Navy to the President of the United States, (1938-39).

<sup>61</sup> "Public Relations Records of the Atlantic Fleet Visit to New York Worlds Fair, 6-16 May 1939." Folder in Philibert Papers, box 154., op. cit..

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., Hanson Baldwin letter to B. L. Austin of May 11, 1939.

<sup>63</sup> Austin Interview.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., it is interesting that motion picture coverage of this event was subsequently used by several television networks when the USS Thresher was lost during a test dive April 10, 1963.

<sup>65</sup> See, Training Instructions for Public Relations Personnel of the Naval Intelligence Service. Washington: Office of Naval Intelligence, GPO, 1939. Philibert Papers, op. cit..

<sup>66</sup> Details of the mobilization of the Public Relations Branch have been provided by Admiral H. R. Thurber, USN (Ret.) who was officer-in-charge from July 16, 1940 to May 1, 1941 when the office became an independent organization directly under the Secretary of the Navy. Details are taken from a report from

Thurber to the Director of Naval History, memorandum to the Director of Naval History, Subject: "History of Navy Public Relations in World War II," undated, Philibert Papers. The major points of this report were verified with Admiral Thurber in telephone conversations conducted August 15 - September 1, 1967. Admiral Thurber died in October 1967 before detailed correspondence on the subject could be undertaken. Excerpts from the portion of his report dealing with the period, July 1940-May, 1941, have been included as an appendix.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>The Secretary of the Navy placed organized Naval Reservists on short notice on October 5, 1940. The Naval Reserve was not activated, however, until June 12, 1941.

<sup>69</sup>Office of the Chief of Naval Operations directive to the Naval Service, subject: Public Relations, Instructions Concerning, Serial 247216 dated March 17, 1941. Underlined portions appear in boldface type in the directive.

<sup>70</sup>Office of the Chief of Naval Operations directive to all commandants of naval districts, Subject: Public Relations, Serial 380616 dated March 19, 1941. The effectiveness of this directive in establishing a district-wide public relations organization can be seen in, "United States Naval Administration in World War II," unpublished narrative histories in the Naval Histories Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, D.C., especially volumes of the 4th, 5th, and 12th naval districts.

<sup>71</sup>Secretary of the Navy directive to all bureaus and offices, Navy Department, Subject: Office of Public Relations, Establishment of; En-1-17/A3-1(410428), serial 959416 dated April 28, 1941.

<sup>72</sup>Office of the Chief of Naval Operations directive to the commandants, naval districts, Subject: Public Relations, Serial 2(A10509) dated May 9, 1941.

## CHAPTER VI

### Summary and Conclusions

## Chapter VI

A retrospective view of the development of the public affairs function in the United States Navy must consider, as well, the political and social contexts which fostered its evolution.

In its earliest practice, in the formation of the United States Navy, such public affairs functions as there were were directed at marshaling political support for legislative action. The limited success of that campaign, however, primarily was attributable to external factors -- the actions of the Barbary corsairs and the French privateers -- which dramatized the need for an adequate seagoing force.

The War of 1812 demonstrated to Americans the inadequacy of a military and naval strategy based on defensive considerations -- reliance upon militia and upon concepts of the Navy as a passive coastal defense force. The strategic lessons which should have been apparent from that war went unlearned and continued to have effect upon the public affairs function throughout the following century.

The Civil War, by its nature, brought to the fore a requirement for information of military and naval operations to be disseminated directly to the citizenry through the media of mass communications.

There were, as well, other factors which hastened

the development of the public affairs function in this period: the technological progress made in the telegraph which could speed information across the continent, broadening the information consumer base and, thereby, the requirement for more information; interservice competition for both funds and manpower which sought support through popular appeals; and the requirements of military security which presaged the need of a formal organization which could operate in the information environment without divulging information of military value to an enemy.

It was in the Civil War that the essentiality of an informed public was demonstrated graphically to naval strategists when a widespread fear along the eastern seaboard clamored for a departure from sound strategy in favor of a heterogeneous posture of fragmented forces -- the first firm inkling that public opinion in operation, especially an alarmed opinion, had profound implications for naval strategy.

In the wake of the Civil War came the natural revulsion to military preparedness. Not so much a characteristically American syndrome, as so often it has been described, but, rather, a more characteristically human desire to rebuild a nation and reestablish political order.

The Civil War had brought attendant progress in technological development -- progress which had deep meaning for naval strategy. The use of armor plate, the potential of steam propulsion, the capabilities of high-velocity naval rifles and exploding shells -- all demanded of the Navy an active transitional program as well as a doctrinal revolution. To facilitate these changes required, in the period between the Civil War and the Spanish-American War, the understanding and the support of the public. These were the forces which operated to sustain the public affairs function in the Navy.

Cooperation by the federal agencies in exhibitions, beginning with the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876 and continuing through to the Panama-Pacific Exhibition in San Francisco in 1914-16, reflected, in President Grant's direction for cooperation, a concern, "...to illustrate the functions...of the government in time of peace and its resources as a war power, and thereby...demonstrate the nature of our institutions and their adaptations to the wants of the people..." -- a conscious attempt to interpret the government to the people.

The writings of Alfred Thayer Mahan in the 1890's heralded a revolution in naval strategy. Though his theories were widely acclaimed by naval strategists,



accepted by political theorists and pragmatists alike, quoted and expounded upon both in and out of the halls of Congress, their diffusion to the American public at large taken for granted, the popular hysteria which swept the eastern seaboard of the United States at the outset of the Spanish-American War urging a complete departure from the dictates of sound naval strategy demonstrated clearly the fallibility of information dissemination. The concept of command of the sea was challenged seriously by the popular demand for a strategy of coastal defense.

News coverage of the Spanish-American War was unique in the annals of reporting. Virtually uninhibited travel by reporters and nearly unlimited access to operations provided detailed, if not always accurate, accounts throughout the military campaign. Again, considerations of military security were raised by the intelligence community in noting Spain's use of these press accounts. This concern, coupled with the success of the Japanese in keeping hidden the movements of their fleet prior to the Battle of Tsushima (May, 1905) in the Russo-Japanese War, led the Navy's General Board, in December, to recommend the creation of a Navy Information Bureau to exercise control over information made public in time of national peril.

The administration of President Theodore Roosevelt

advanced the mergence of foreign and military policy with a consideration for the effects of public opinion upon that policy. A natural outgrowth from this philosophy was the Navy General Board's enunciation, in 1913, of the need for naval policy to be made public.

Roosevelt's administration was marked, too, by a popular appeal for continuous and orderly development of military forces as a foundation of national military power, a requisite with the emergence of the United States as a world power. The presidential leadership of public opinion took many forms. In naval affairs, the most dramatic moves to popularize the Navy were the fleet reviews and the round-the-world cruise of the battleship fleet.

In this same era was established an independent civilian body whose purpose was to strengthen the U.S. Navy through direct appeals to the people of the nation -- the Navy League of the United States. Though the Navy's role in the creation and development of the League remains obscure, active Navy cooperation with League events doubtless had salutary effects.

The building program of President Roosevelt brought yet another naval need into focus -- that of increasing numbers of personnel. The attendant requirement for sustained publicity campaigns on behalf of

recruiting encouraged the Navy to establish recruiting publicity bureaus in the major news centers of the United States. Once established, these operations lent themselves admirably to Navy information programs.

In the Taft administration, the lack of a progressive naval policy saw increased appropriations become the target of spoils while necessary overseas base development in support of far-flung responsibilities went wanting -- providing yet another example of the need for a definitive policy backed by public understanding and support.

The administration of President Wilson was not without political objectives. The progress of international events, however, were to frustrate those objectives and precipitate the world into devastating war. To the extent that Wilson's objectives departed from international political reality as seen by military and naval strategists, there was bound to arise a climate of discontent, discouragement and frustration. Within this climate was fostered a greater appreciation on the part of the Navy for the value and importance of public understanding of military and naval policies.

With the United States' entry into the war came the most ambitious program of information and education yet attempted -- the formation of the Committee on

Public Information. The Navy's part in this program was carried by the Navy News Bureau, created especially for the purpose of informing the nation about the details of the naval war efforts. The formalization of that news organization in 1917, established a pattern of operation responsive to the informational needs of the nation. The realization that the policies which dictated this operation represented solely those of the administration caused further evaluation of the utility of such a function during congressional investigations of the Navy Department in 1920.

Following World War I, the United States found itself unable to withdraw from international affairs. Though it remained aloof from membership in the League of Nations, the country still concerned itself with the reestablishment of world order. Popular interest provided the support for peace movements which manifested themselves, in 1922, in the naval Limitation of Arms Conference in Washington. The resultant threat to the maintenance of naval forces felt by naval strategists to be necessary to continued world peace, coupled with the collateral threat posed by the developing technological advances of air power, led naval planners, in 1922, to establish within the Office of Naval Intelligence an information function designed to combat anti-Navy propaganda. Though propaganda was not the problem,

it was the means of appeal for popular support.

In an effort to propagate a greater understanding of the Navy's role in national security affairs, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., proposed, in 1921 and again in 1923, that a special course of instruction for selected members of the press be instituted at the Naval War College. Though restriction in available funds precluded beginning that project, a plan was initiated by Secretary of the Navy Denby to embark editors and publishers in fleet units during portions of the annual fleet training exercises. The first "press cruise" took place in the winter, 1923-24, and the program continued annually thereafter until 1936.

Consolidation of the information function within the Navy Department began in 1922. While Secretary Denby carried on the precedent of conducting the daily press conferences himself, he directed the bureaus and offices of the Navy Department to assist the Information Section of Naval Intelligence by appointing an officer who would have cognizance over informational affairs. He also required that timely information be submitted to the Department as it occurred.

To spread the information network throughout the naval service, Denby, in 1923, emphasized the value of

good press relations and directed all naval district commandants to establish contact with press representatives in their respective areas. Assistance was provided by the Director of Naval Intelligence in the form of guides to press relations, study courses in news handling and materials suitable for public release on the United States and world navies.

In 1926, the first steps were taken to create a Naval Reserve nucleus qualified for special duties in public relations in the event of mobilization for war. Planning for this eventuality continued until implementation in 1940 when carefully selected and specially qualified individuals were asked to come on active duty in the Public Relations Branch of Naval Intelligence, a year prior to the activation of the Naval Reserve.

The popular opinion which had first supported President Wilson in his quest for conciliatory settlements of world disputes, supported, as well, his policies to enter the war to make "the world safe for democracy." In the post-war period, this same opinion turned a deaf ear to preparedness advocates and supported the limitation of arms philosophies of President Harding. Finally, in the administration of President Coolidge, that opinion turned to concern for internal prosperity and development. With peace secured by international agreement, it seemed

to the largest segment of American people that there was little to be concerned over in the state of readiness of their armed forces. Though the Geneva Conference of 1927 ended in failure, preoccupation with internal development remained only slightly broken and was soon reinforced by the Kellogg-Briand peace pact of 1928.

The pacifist policies of President Hoover further kindled the country's hopes for peace and promised to a nation whose economy was deeply depressed, some respite from the burden of defense expenditures.

The agreements of the London Naval Limitation of Arms Conference, in 1930, brought still further hope for the avoidance of a naval race. At the end of the Conference, the United States was still far under the ship tonnages allowed by the agreements and, with the economic situation of the nation in difficulty and considering the political objectives of President Hoover, it was quite likely to remain so.

Meanwhile, the Office of Naval Intelligence, acting through the Secretary of the Navy, continued to refine its information procedures and attempted to further sophisticate its operations throughout the service. Special events such as the demonstration of naval aircraft from the deck of the aircraft carrier Lexington and the touring flight demonstration over the major cities of the northeastern seaboard were staged in

May, less than a month following the agreement in London. While there is nothing written officially which would link the events, it is unlikely that the show was without purpose. Although the London Conference had placed a limit upon aircraft carrier tonnages, it had not been able to reach any agreement on limitation of aircraft.

From the outset, it appeared that the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt would be forced to concern itself with internal development in order to recover from the depression. The tide of international events, however, forced a modification of that thinking as first the Japanese, then the Italians and, finally, the Germans and Russians embarked upon courses of conquest.

The failure of the second London Naval Limitation of Arms Conference in 1935-36 set the stage for world rearmament. In January, 1938, President Roosevelt asked Congress for a \$1 billion naval appropriations bill. The "two-ocean Navy" measure was passed in May over the voices of the pacifists and the United States, belated as usual, found herself with both feet planted in the greatest naval race in history.

The mobilization of public relation activities began in 1940 and continued through to the United States' entry into the war. Utilizing the Naval Reservists who



had been specially selected and trained, or who were otherwise qualified by the nature of their civilian occupations, the Public Relations Branch of Naval Intelligence expanded in less than a year from thirteen personnel to fifty-five by the end of May, 1941. Additional plans had been implemented to create, within the naval districts as well, the nucleus force of qualified Reservists. Public Relation officers had been placed, also, in both the Atlantic and Pacific Fleets commands.

On May 1, 1941, the public affairs function in the Navy became, once again, an independent function responsible directly to the Secretary of the Navy. Later, through the efforts of Admiral Ernest J. King, the office became responsible also to the Chief of Naval Operations.

#### Conclusions

Within the period of this survey, the nature and role of the Armed Forces of the United States have changed: adapted to the shifting requirements of both the society these forces serve and to the political and social institutions they are created to defend.

Throughout this development has run the thread of political consistency. Military power, or the lack of it, is political -- in being as well as in use.

The question of whether to raise and maintain standing armies and navies has not been long a major issue for the people of the United States, but, rather, the degree at which they should be maintained, and at what cost to a democratic society -- that is the question. The answers, such as they are found, form the fabric of our national policy.

From its beginnings, the Navy has sought to gain support for the maintenance of both its efficiency and its combat capability. That role is implicit in the political leadership of the service, in the office of the Secretary of the Navy.

It was within the office of the Secretary, then, that the public affairs function had its natural beginnings. Nor is it surprising to find that the function reached its peaks of refinement under three secretaries who had been newspaper publishers: Gideon Welles, Josephus Daniels and Frank Knox, and in periods of its greatest need: the Civil War, World War I and World War II.

Of cardinal consequence in advancing the development of the function were the extraordinary requirements of naval forces for orderly development -- war was too late. The complex demands of technological progress --

of building ships and training crews to man them -- required both orderly and constant attention. The problem became how to demonstrate the need, how to enunciate the national policy in terms meaningful to the body politic, and how to translate meaning into dollars and cents support.

The needs of the service evolved from the needs of the nation. The requirements of national security policy were translated into terms of funds, men and ships by which that policy could be supported. The multifarious nature of policy determinants involved complex considerations of both national and international interests. Catalysts, events, internal and external rivalries, effects of technology, wants and fears -- operated in both positive and negative ways to hasten or retard policy development. This was the environment in which the public affairs function had to operate.

From its beginning attempts to influence legislators, the public affairs function in the United States Navy proceeded to the time of the Civil War when it shifted its approach to the more mature managerial concept of responsibility to the broad base of political support -- the people themselves. This point marks the beginning of the public affairs function in its

operational sense -- the "turning mark" where the helm was shifted and the course changed.

Throughout its short history, the public affairs function and its development had been characterized by reaction rather than by initiative. Each of the milestones passed came as a result of political or practical problems faced by the Navy. Perhaps this was because the evolution of the function developed along a political model: never had the function known rational progression. Programs were designed to overcome problems of the present; seldom anticipating future evolution. Interpretation of the Navy to the public was the goal -- interpretation of the public to the Navy never envisioned.

Partly this was due to the absolute nature of military operations. Senior officers, knowing they must succeed or fail, survive or perish with available forces on hand in any crisis, found little interest in public hopes for disarmament which, they felt, were unjustified by the international situation. Conflict in interest stood as a bar to mutual understanding. Men who had bled knew that bleeding was less when training and capabilities were greated; that less of the nation's treasure was spent when spent continuously on orderly development rather than in huge crash programs. The concepts were difficult to

convey to a public who saw a chance for a detente, a hope for disarmament and the opportunity to devote their energies to peaceful pursuits. The question of balance and the quest for understanding fostered the growth of the public affairs function.

Competition certainly played its part. Competition for funds; strong interservice rivalries for manpower, monies, and functional assignment; competition against peace groups and advocates of disarmament and with other segments of society striving for public attention and support.

The nature of the society demanded that the public have knowledge enough to provide support in the degree required. But, how much knowledge could be imparted in a free society without endangering fighting ability by informing an enemy? The question of military security and censorship versus freedom of information, too, spurred the development of the public affairs function.

Yet the demands for information to the public had great significance to the vitality of naval policy. In its first public pronouncement, the Navy General Board placed on record its recommendations to the Secretary of the Navy on naval policy. Included as an appendix to the Secretary's annual report in 1913, it addressed the public affairs function:

...In the opinion of the General Board any rational and natural development of the Navy looking to the continuance of peace and the maintenance of our national policies demands the adoption of, and the consistent adherence to, a governmental naval policy founded on our needs and aims. To give life to such a policy requires the support of the people and the Congress; and this support can only be obtained by giving the widest publicity to the policy itself and to the reasons and arguments in its support, and taking the people and the Congress into the full confidence of the Government, inviting intelligent criticism as well as support. The General Board believes that only a lack of understanding...by the people at large prevents the adoption of a consistent naval policy; and recommends to the department a system of extended publicity in all matters relating to naval policy, acting through patriotic organizations, the press, or by whatever means a knowledge of the naval needs of the Nation may be brought home to the people of the country...

Behind that statement lay the most perplexing problem confronting the public affairs function: The basic consideration of responsibility. Did naval policy rest with the Commander-in-Chief, and, thereby, naval public relations policy with it? Or did the public affairs function, as the national security function, have a greater responsibility directly to the people? In questions where the best professional judgment varied with that of the Chief Executive, who should know of it? Who controlled the policy governing public affairs? Why was control necessary? To what purpose was it exercised?

In 1941, the public affairs function in the Navy found itself soon to be responsible to two authorities: the political authority embodied in the Secretary of the Navy, and the military authority vested in the Chief of Naval Operations. Theorists who saw in the function a discharge of basic responsibilities to the people of the nation in keeping them fully informed could afford to disabuse themselves of that nation. The public affairs function had grown from the Navy's requirement to win a broad base of support for its policies.

Looking ahead to the post-war reorganization of the defense establishment and the creation of the Department of Defense in 1948, would serve to highlight the problem. When military objectives were in consonance with political policies, there were few problems for public affairs. When the two courses diverged, however, the concert became cacophony. The problem, in this later period, was transferred up yet another notch in the bureaucracy. With this important exception: the military organization under the Department of Defense had lost its voice.

The organization, in 1941, of the Office of Public Relations was the product of the many forces which had preceded it; had demanded it. It was not enough to realize that, for the Navy, the helm had been put "a'lee," but, further, to consider what course the ship would steer and whose hand was on the helm.

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## APPENDIX A

Excerpts from Commander H. R. Thurber Memo  
to the Director of Naval History; "Navy  
Public Relations, July 1940 - May 1941."

...From July 16, 1940, to 1 May 1941, I was officer in charge of the Public Relations Branch in the Navy Department, and was under the Director of the Office of Naval Intelligence, in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. From 1 May to 27 May 1941, I was attached, as acting director, to the Office of Public Relations, Navy Department, public relations having been transferred as of 1 May from cognizance of the Office of Naval Intelligence to the Office of the Secretary of the Navy...

...When I reported for duty as officer in charge, the Public Relations Branch, Navy Department, was manned by 2 other USN officers who had recently reported, 2 USNR officers, 2 experienced civilian assistants, 4 civilian clerical personnel and 2 enlisted Marines. The branch handled press relations, radio, photographic and other phases of public relations in 3 rooms located between the 8th and 9th wings on the front corridor of the 2nd floor of the Navy Department. The former press section officer remained on board until turnover was completed. Personnel attached were capable, and the branch was operating on principles which had been established over a period of years. Public relations offices in the Naval Districts were, in total, below peacetime operating strength.

The directive issued to me was "to build the office up for an emergency". War plans for such a contingency existed, having been written in 1924 and revised through 1939. Those plans were analyzed, and, after some changes, action was taken on the task assigned.

The first step was that of obtaining additional numbers of experienced personnel. Records of Naval Reserves slated for war-time duty in Navy Public Relations were reviewed and tentative selections made of those who would head the various sections of a war-time Office. There was no legal requirement for these Reserve officers to enter service in 1940; however, selected candidates were interviewed and asked to enter active service provided their personal situation would permit. This procedure was effective, although the time element often appeared protracted as activities expanded and pre-wartime pressure increased.

With additional personnel, and a general speed-up of public relations because of the international situation, it was necessary to obtain larger operating space and in a location that was more accessible to members of the press, radio and photographic services. The entire Navy Department was beginning to expand, but space (7 rooms) was acquired in August 1940, on the first floor, front corridor, next the center (main) entrance to the Navy Department.

Problems of actual public relations were carried forward toward solution, and are discussed under individual headings, in the order: OPR organization, press, radio, pictorial, scripts, civic liaison and naval districts, reference section, voluntary censorship, special projects, comments.

During the period the foregoing were taken in hand, the international situation affecting Navy public relations developed rapidly. The Acting Secretary of the Navy signed in September 1940, contracts for the "\$4,000,000,000 Navy" (200 combatant ships, 2400 airplanes, expansion of the naval shore establishment); fifty over-age U.S. destroyers were given to the British in exchange for the right to lease British naval and air bases in the Western Atlantic; the Selective Service and Training Act was enacted; the export of iron and steel scrap to Japan was prohibited; and Germany, Italy and Japan signed a treaty of alliance which contained a threat against the United States. In January 1941, the President addressed Congress on "the four freedoms", and his budget message requested an additional eleven billion dollars for the national defense program. Repairs to British men-of-war, damaged in the sea war, were undertaken in U.S. naval shipyards. In March 1941, Congress passed the Lend-Lease bill, and the President stated the great task of the day was to "move projects from the assembly lines of our factories to the battle lines of democracy - Now! On May 27, 1941, an unlimited national emergency was declared.

#### OPR ORGANIZATION.

In July 1940, the Navy Department's Public Relations Branch (referred to hereafter as OPR) had an officer in charge (Commander, USN) three officers and an experienced civilian assistant in the press section, and one officer, with an experienced civilian assistant, who handled general information requests, pictorial, radio and such other duties as were assigned.

War plans for OPR called for a Rear Admiral as director, a deputy director, a press section, radio section, photographic (stills) section, Motion picture

section, and general information section. Provisions were made for liaison with Navy public relations branches in the Naval Districts and with Navy public relations representatives afloat.

The mission of OPR, as evolved from U.S. Navy Policy, was to make available to the public through press, radio, pictorial, and other media, all information concerning the Navy that was compatible with military security, in order to keep the people of this country informed of the activities and conditions of the Navy. Decision was made in July 1940 that in order to carry out this mission, OPR's motto should be "service, consistent with security". Because of the international situation and the country's current response to threats against our national security, it was determined that attempts to "sell the Navy" to the country were irrelevant and should be firmly and scrupulously avoided...

To further the accomplishment of OPR's mission, personnel acquired were assigned to carry out functions for which they were judged best-fitted, with the following organization in view:

- a. Director.
- b. Assistant Director.
- c. Administrative Section.
- d. Plans Section.
- e. Press Section.
- f. Radio Section.
- g. Pictorial Section.
- h. Scripts Section.
- i. Civic Liaison and Naval Districts Section.
- j. Reference Section.

By the middle of May 1941, the foregoing organization was operative, although sections were not completely staffed.

During the growth of OPR in the period under review, the undersigned acted as "Director", with the assigned responsibility of enunciating and effectuating approved public relations policies of the Navy. Lieutenant Commander (now Captain) R. W. Berry, USN, acted as "Assistant Director", as well as officer-in-charge of the Press Relations Section until September 1941 when the latter duty was assigned Lieutenant Commander (now Captain) W. H. Wharton, USNR, formerly of the editorial staff of the OREGON JOURNAL and who had reported in for duty in the spring of 1941.

Administrative. Lieutenant (now Captain) H. W.

Gordon, Jr., USN was in charge of the "Administrative Section" throughout, and had numerous additional duties until relieved of them by incoming personnel. The Administrative Section had cognizance of accrediting press, radio, magazine and photographic representatives to the Fleets; of the business management of OPR - personnel, budget, equipment, space, orders, travel; of mail distribution and files; and of the reference library, which eventually became a separate section. Correspondence handled through the Administrative Section during the period under comment totalled 26,533 letters, representing answers to queries for factual information from the press, colleges, schools societies, publishers and individuals, and correspondence initiated by OPR.

In anticipation of the "war" influx of correspondents, writers, radio broadcasters, and photographers into the Fleets, and the attendant administrative and policy details, arrangements were made in April 1941 with the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, to have Lieutenant Commander Waldo F. Drake, USN of the LOS ANGELES TIMES, ordered to PacFt staff as Fleet Public Relations Officer, and with the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, to have Lieutenant Commander (now Commander) Stuyvesant B. Wright, USNR, formerly of PARAMOUNT NEWS, ordered to his staff as Fleet Public Relations officer.

In addition to assistance in the forming of three Fleet units for combat photography, and of the combat artist group the Administrative Section worked with U.S. Marine Corps Representatives in formulating plans for Marine combat correspondents.

Plans. Lieutenant Commander (now Captain) W. M. Galvin, USNR, former Secretary of the Navy League of the United States, was placed in charge of the "Plans Section"<sup>1</sup> on his entry into active service in September 1940, with the responsibility of evaluating and making recommendations on Navy public relations problems. Specific tasks initially assigned were: (1) future organization of Navy public relations ashore and afloat for efficient war service; (2) war liaison of Navy public relations with other current and prospective government public relations activities; (3) constant review and analysis of public reactions to the Navy's activities with a view toward improvement in the Navy's public relations. Task (1) was completed in late

<sup>1</sup>Originally, "Analysis Section"; later "Research Section."

October 1940; task (2) in January 1941; task (3) was immediately operative and was subsequently expanded in February 1941. Lieutenant Commander Galvin's section was increased to five officers by May 1941, and during the interim contributed numerous plans whose implementation will be included hereafter in the outline of activities of other sections.

### PRESS

The Press Relations Section (hereafter referred to as the Press Section) expanded in this period from 3 officers and 1 experienced civilian assistant, to 9 officers and 2 experienced civilian assistants.

Press Section cognizance was as follows:

- a. Preparation and distribution of press releases.
- b. Answering requests from the press, and from individuals with respect to Navy news.
- c. Maintaining close liaison with the press; with press conferences of the President, the Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of War; and with the Navy Department bureaus and offices.

Preparation and distribution of press releases. Preparation of releases was carried out under the supervision of the officer in charge of the Press Section, in consultation with the "Director" whenever matters of policy were involved. During the period covered by this summary, 1644 formal releases were made to the press, varying from 1 to 88 pages. (During the preceding fiscal year, 1216 such releases were made; during the year before that, 900). The number of informal releases of information is indeterminate, but it is estimated to have increased during the period covered in about the same ratio as the formal releases. Distribution of each formal release was made within the Navy Department press room and at the National Press Club. No mailing list was maintained.

Answering Requests. In accordance with tradition, the officer in charge of the Press Section was "on call" for 24 hours each day. As additional personnel reported and were given a familiarization course, a system of "watch officers" was inaugurated in order to provide answers to queries which were increasing materially as international tension mounted. In November 1940, a 16-hour Press Section watch was set; and in May 1941, a 24-hour watch was activated.

Liaison. The move of OPR to new quarters in August 1940 permitted of increased facilities for representatives of the press associations and large daily newspapers having Washington bureaus. This closer liaison provided for more accurate reporting of Navy news, and for correcting misstatements or inaccurate statements concerning the Navy.

The "Director", OPR, maintained close liaison with the Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations, and delegated this responsibility when necessary. The officer in charge of the Press Section arranged for regular conferences of the Secretary of the Navy with the press, briefed the Secretary in advance, and arranged for record and distribution of his remarks. The officer in charge of the Press Section attended press conferences of the President, and a Press Section representative attended press conferences of the Secretary of War.

Commencing in August 1940, the undersigned directed that closer contacts be established with the bureaus and offices of the Navy Department. The Press Section was able, as personnel increased, to carry out this directive by creating "teams" to develop newsworthy details hitherto dormant.

Navy Radio News. In December 1940, the Press Section commenced issuing Navy Radio News to the Fleet and outlying stations. The United Press had been supplying a news digest to the Navy Department (Communication Watch Officer) for dissemination to the Fleet, but in October 1940, expressed a desire to terminate this service at the Navy's earliest convenience. Negotiations conducted by the undersigned resulted in having this digest continued, in modified form, and supplied to the "first watch" officer in the Press Section. Here it was further edited and augmented with news of particular Navy interest, for radio transmission to the Navy. This improved service met a long-felt desire for last-minute news to the Fleet and outlying stations.

## RADIO

The Radio Section of OPR was not formalized until February 1941. Lieutenant Commander N. W. Sharpe, USNR, (former independent radio consultant) who had been performing the functions of officer in charge of the Navy's radio public relations while still attached to the Press Section, was named as head of the Radio Section in a new OPR organizational paper, and was assigned an assistant. (In June, two additional assistants reported to this Section.)

The Radio Section had cognizance of arrangements for Navy participation in national broadcast programs, of answering queries from radio news broadcasters, of assistance in script preparation for addresses by naval personnel, and of liaison with commercial broadcasts.

Arrangements for the Navy's participation in national broadcast programs included those necessary for 16 addresses by the Secretary of the Navy, 2 by the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 5 by the Chief of Naval Operations, and 23 by various high-ranking officers; for 19 national news events, such as the ceremonies attendant upon launching of major naval vessels; for Navy Day programs; for Christmas Day programs; for 38 nationwide recruiting programs; and for consideration of numerous, varied requests from national broadcasting companies.

National radio news broadcasters received much of their assistance from the Press Section but there were numerous calls on the Radio Section for additional, "background" material.

While script preparation was not visualized as a permanent function of the Radio Section, nevertheless much of this was carried out as a service, particularly in the 1940-41 recruiting programs, in which OPR assistance was requested by the Navy Department's Director of Recruiting. Script preparation included 11 addresses on recruiting for particular phases of the Navy's needs, and 293 recruiting "tag-lines" for nationally-known entertainment leaders and national news commentators, all of whom requested this as a privilege.

Liaison with commercial entertainment broadcast (advertising) programs was a problem which was met by a directive, drafted by the officer in charge of radio relations, and signed by the Chief of Naval Operations in December 1940. This permitted commercial entertainment broadcasts afloat and ashore, provided the Navy were not directly identified with the product advertised, and further, that each broadcast would include a statement to the effect that the program had been staged for the entertainment of naval personnel concerned and did not constitute an endorsement by the Navy of the product advertised.

During this period, preliminary arrangements were started (in January 1941) on the request of a national broadcasting company, for short-wave radio broadcasts of entertainment and morale value to the Navy overseas. Negotiations were not completed at this time, but



security and communications problems for these broadcasts were solved and the project was in readiness for future, war use.

The Radio Section entered into the Navy's educational campaign on voluntary censorship, and by participation in three major panel discussions assisted in arriving at a satisfactory understanding between the Navy Department and the broadcasting companies of the security problems involved.

As a result of its monitoring of broadcasts, the Radio Section recommended in May 1941, that Japanese language broadcasts from Hawaii be eliminated. This recommendation was translated into a draft letter, subsequently sent by the Chief of Naval Operations to the Commandant Fourteenth Naval District.

### PICTORIAL

The Pictorial Section of OPR was established in December 1940 under Lieutenant Commander (now Captain) E. John Long, USNR, formerly on the executive staff of the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE. Cognizance of this new section was assigned as follows: still photographs - news, features and advertising; motion pictures - news, feature shorts and productions; artists - arrangements and display; posters. These responsibilities previously had been assigned various members of OPR staff, who continued to assist Lieutenant Commander Long until additional personnel reported for duty. By May 1941, there were three officer assistants, an experienced civilian assistant and two clerical personnel in this Section.

Still photographs. Prior to December 1940, the growing number of requests for Navy "still" photographic material had placed a heavy load on an understaffed OPR<sup>2</sup>. Problems of procurement, laboratory processing, editing, clearing for security, and ready availability had been analyzed, but progress in solving these was slow. In December 1940, the Navy was issuing, on request, about 7,000 still photographs a year. Commencing in January 1941, as a result of more expeditious clearance arrangements with the Department's security agency, official

<sup>2</sup>As an example of the work involved in meeting requests for pictorial cooperation, over 1500 photos, together with script captions and layouts were reviewed, for the "Navy Day Issue" (October 1940) of LIFE Magazine, which had resulted from negotiations between LIFE editors and the undersigned in early August.

Navy photographs were displayed in the Press section in connection with news releases, and more rapid cooperation was made possible in supplying photographs requested by pictorial magazines and newspaper rotogravure sections. Twenty-two pictorial Navy features of large scope were requested by leading magazines, and over four hundred Navy photographs were used in rotogravure sections during the period of this report. In the advertising field, numerous requests from 21 national advertising agencies were met by assistance in reviewing layouts, copy, photographs, and furnishing material and photographs for nationwide advertisements having the Navy as the main background. In May 1941, by improving the quality and variety of naval photographs and the production line, the Pictorial Section was issuing approximately 1,000 still photographs a day.

Motion Pictures. Arrangements were made with motion picture news reel companies during the period under review for coverage, on their request, and for security clearance, of 46 Navy news events of national interest. Cooperation was extended five major motion picture companies for feature shorts of 22 Navy subjects which were requested and were subsequently cleared by the Department's security agency. Arrangements were made with news reel companies for film and editing in the make-up of a new and up-to-date recruiting film, entitled "The Battle". OPR cooperated in the review and scripts of 13 major motion picture productions, of which 10 were cleared, as suitable, and 3 rejected. Close relationships were maintained with the "Hays Organization", which resulted (March 1941), in holding up shipments to the Japanese government of news reels showing U.S. Navy activities; in the forming of Naval Reserve units of camera men and technicians for research, and of three Fleet units for combat photography; in assistance to naval recruiting; and in supplying naval subjects for motion pictures to be distributed in Latin America for furthering the "good-neighbor" policy.

Artists. Prior to establishment of the Pictorial Section, foundations were laid by the undersigned for an art project as a phase of the Navy's public relations... A number of artists, etchers, and illustrators were interviewed, and arrangements inaugurated to start the shore phase. Mr. Vernon Howe Bailey, an eminent etcher and water color artist, was obtained through financial contract with the Bureau of Ships, and was started in the spring of 1941 on a comprehensive record of ship-building which subsequently had been partially displayed in art exhibits throughout the country, and reproduced in magazines and in rotogravure sections of metropolitan

newspapers. In March 1941, Mr. Griffith Baily Coale, president of the National Society of Mural Painters, was selected as the prospective officer in charge of a group of naval artists. Commander Coale's work as a combat artist and a writer, his cooperation in obtaining other outstanding naval combat artists, and his enthusiastic leadership in this field are too well-known to be repeated in this commentary. Eventually, under Lieutenant Commander Long's later guidance, an experienced "curator" served during the War to correlate the many phases of this activity. This art project will have a lasting value in the Navy's public relations.

Posters. In pursuance of requests from lithographing firms and from the (President's) Office of Facts and Figures, the Pictorial Section cooperated in supplying Navy material for Navy recruiting posters, for "spy" posters being prepared by the Society of Illustrators, and for the THINKAMERICAN series of posters.

Correlation of photographic activities. As a result of the increased demand for Navy still photographs and motion pictures during the emergency period, the photographic facilities available to OPR became seriously overtaxed by the spring of 1941. A study of laboratory facilities available led to the submission of a memorandum by OPR, embodying specific suggestions for revision and improvement of the entire framework of Navy photography. As a result of this memorandum, the Secretary of the Navy convened a Photographic Board. The report of this board, on which OPR was represented by Lieutenant Commander Long, set forth principles that guided official Navy photography throughout World War II.

Following the submission of a memorandum from OPR in the spring of 1941, a board was convened to revise General Order Number 96, which governed the taking and publication of photographs of naval subjects for publication. General Order No. 179 resulted, and gave a workable solution for this subject during World War II.

### SCRIPTS.

The Scripts Section was formed in August 1940 under Lieutenant (jg) (now Captain) Victor F. Blakeslee, USN (Ret.), a capable writer, and was assigned cognizance of:

a. Preparation of addresses for the Secretary of the Navy, the Under-secretary of the Navy, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and for high-ranking naval officers.

b. Preparation of "ceremonial" statements for the Secretary of the Navy;

c. Assistance to writers and publishers in preparation of books, magazine articles and pamphlets.

Scripts preparation and assistance for addresses totalled 31 during the period under review, the addresses varying in length from fifteen to forty-five minutes' delivery time.

"Ceremonial statements" prepared by the Scripts Section numbered 92, and included such subjects as Alnavs for the centenary observance of Admiral Mahan's birth<sup>3</sup>, for Navy Day, for Thanksgiving, for Christmas, for Army Day, for the founding of the Marine Corps; congratulatory messages to national patriotic organizations; Chief of Naval Operations' messages to the commanding officers of naval ships being newly commissioned.

Assistance to writers and publishers imposed an increasing challenge to the resourcefulness of the Scripts Section. In the book field, the manuscripts of 24 authors were reviewed, and suggestions for additional material or changes were accepted by the authors. In the magazine field, aid was given to LIFE for eight major articles on the Navy; to FORTUNE for three Navy studies; to the SATURDAY EVENING POST for four expository articles on the Navy<sup>4</sup>; to the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE for four illustrated Navy articles; to COLLIER'S, COSMOPOLITAN, AMERICAN, LOOK, POPULAR SCIENCE MONTHLY, ARCHITECTURAL FORUM, MACHINERY, THIS WEEK, AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE JOURNAL, ARMY ORDNANCE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL, for feature Navy articles in their field; to Nelson Rockefeller (Coordinator for Commercial and Cultural Relations Between the American Republics) in illustrated magazine publications for circulation in Latin America.

<sup>3</sup>In connection with the Mahan centenary, OPR prepared a suitable ceremonial message for press release by the President, made arrangements for a wreath-laying ritual at Mahan's grave, and aided the Naval War College in observance of the day.

<sup>4</sup>One of these, "Ships, Men - and Bases" by the Secretary of the Navy (with Fletcher Pratt) was reprinted free-of-charge by the POST publishers in pamphlet (color illustrated) form, and 20,000 copies distributed "for the Navy Department in the interest of National Defense".

Pamphlet assistance included preparation for the Chairman of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee of an illustrated booklet (Senate Document No. 53) on "The United States Navy", for congressional distribution; preparation for the American Council on Public Affairs of "The United States Navy in National Defense" by Frank Knox, Secretary of the Navy, for a nationwide sale; review of four major pamphlet studies on the national defense by the Foreign Policy Association; review of material submitted by the Navy League of the United States.

#### CIVIC LIAISON AND NAVAL DISTRICTS SECTION.

This Section was not formalized until late in February 1941, and was then placed in charge of Lieutenant Commander (now Captain) James G. Stahlman, USNR, owner and publisher of the NASHVILLE BANNER, who had volunteered to the Secretary of the Navy in January for Navy public relations duty. Prior to the establishment of this Section, its functions were carried on by the Administrative Section.

Cognizance of the Civic Liaison and Naval Districts Section<sup>5</sup> included liaison with Public Relations Officers in the Naval Districts, and cooperation with welfare, patriotic, civic, fraternal, educational, entertainment (USO) and other civilian organizations (decentralizing to Districts whenever feasible).

...In February, 1941, Lieutenant Commander Stahlman was sent on a tour of the Districts to investigate problems of the public relations officers. As a result of this tour, closer liaison procedure was established and a directive was signed by the Chief of Naval Operations for further increases in Districts' public relations personnel. A "Guide to Navy Public Relations", initiated by the undersigned, was prepared by the Section, and issued in March, 1941, to the Naval Districts by the Chief of Naval Operations<sup>6</sup>. A further letter<sup>7</sup> was prepared by the Section, at the direction of the undersigned, and issued to the naval service by the Chief of Naval Operations in March 1941, for guidance in connection with the Navy's campaign for voluntary censorship. Plans were formulated in May for a conference of public relations officers from the Naval Districts in Washington in the summer of 1941.

<sup>5</sup>Later changed to the Naval District Section.

<sup>6</sup>CNC Serial 380616 of March 19, 1941.

<sup>7</sup>CNC Serial 247216 of March 17, 1941.

Civic Liaison. Requests of national civic groups<sup>8</sup> on OPR for speakers, Navy exhibits and naval participation in celebrations were originally handled by the Administrative Section, decentralized wherever possible to the Public Relations Officers of the Naval Districts. This function was gradually taken over by the Civic Liaison and Naval Districts Section, and further decentralized to the Districts.

#### REFERENCE SECTION.

The Reference Section was established February 1, 1941, under the supervision of Miss Helene Philibert, with experience of over twenty years in the Navy Department's Press Section. Miss Estelle Philibert, a capable statistician, was enrolled as assistant. Inspection was made of the systems in the New York Public Library (government publication section), and the libraries and "morgues" of the Associated Press and the New York Herald Tribune.

In late February, organization was started of reference material hitherto accumulated by the Press and other Sections. Binding, arranging, and indexing of press releases (from July 1919 to date), assembly and indexing of Congressional hearings and bills on the Navy, indexing digests of Navy contracts, consolidation and indexing of biographical material, binding and arrangement of histories of all U.S. Navy ships and air squadrons, and assembly of authoritative Navy historical reference material continued with commendable speed and efficiency. By May 1941, the Reference Section not only had been able to meet the numerous demands of other OPR Sections, but also had assisted materially in supplying a remarkable volume of source material requested by other bureaus and offices of the Navy Department.

#### VOLUNTARY CENSORSHIP.

The international situation affecting Navy public relations developed...(sentence obscured)...military value to the Axis powers was unrestricted, except for that issued by the Navy Department. I discussed this problem with the Director of Naval Intelligence and recommended that a letter be sent by Secretary Knox to

<sup>8</sup>The Navy League of the United States was lacking in active leadership and finances in 1940, but commencing early in 1941, under the presidency of the Honorable Sheldon Clark, assumed a positive role in supporting a national information program on the Navy.

all U.S. press, magazine, radio and photographic agencies requesting their voluntary cooperation in the avoidance of publicity - unless announced or authorized by the Navy Department - on certain subjects. This recommendation was based on the following factors:

a. Agreement in Joint Army and Navy Board reports dating back to 1937, that censorship of these agencies in time of war should be limited at least initially, to voluntary, self-imposed censorship.

b. The probability that the U.S. would be totally embroiled in World War II, and allied with the British.

c. The fact that in World War I, a "list" or code for specific guidance in voluntary censorship had not been available until seven weeks after hostilities began.

d. The thought that an educational period in voluntary censorship would be mutually beneficial to the agencies concerned and the Navy.

As a result of this recommendation and further discussions of a draft prepared by the undersigned, Secretary Knox sent the following confidential letter to over 3,200 agencies:

"December 31, 1940

"Dear

"As the present emergency has become more critical, many news, magazine, radio and photographic agencies have requested me to advise them as to the manner in which they can make their services more helpful to the Navy. This cooperative attitude is much appreciated.

"Speaking not only as Secretary of the Navy but also as a former newspaper publisher, I believe that if further assistance is requested of publishing agencies in the interests of national defense, it will be gladly extended.

At the moment, the Navy finds itself seriously hampered in the proper conduct of its preparations for the present emergency because of dissemination to the public - and thereby to unfriendly powers - of certain details concerning these preparations.

"Your cooperation, therefore, is requested after January 15, 1941 in avoidance of publicity -- unless announced or authorized by the Navy Department -- on the following subjects:

- "(1) Actual or intended movements of vessels or aircraft of the U.S. Navy, of units of naval enlisted personnel or divisions of mobilized reserves, or troop movements of the U.S. Marine Corps:
- "(2) (Mention of) "Secret" technical U.S. naval weapons or development thereof:
- "(3) New U.S. Navy ships or aircraft;
- "(4) U.S. Navy construction projects ashore.

"In making this request, I wish to assure you that the Navy Department will continue to release information concerning the foregoing subjects to an extent that is consonant with public interest and with the effectiveness of the Navy's preparations.

"A similar confidential letter is being sent simultaneously to all the listed American press, magazine, radio and photographic agencies.

Sincerely,

/s/ FRANK KNOX  
Secretary of the Navy"

Replies to this letter were practically 100 per cent in acceptance. There were natural questions arising from such a proposal: e.g. - Would there be similar "lists" from other government departments? Would there be some Navy agency available for rapid decisions on clearance for news material of questionable security? Would the Navy's "list" be changed, or eventually made more specific? The National Press Club, in Washington, undertook to approach these problems by arranging an "off-the-record" forum on press censorship, 14 March 1941, to which Mr. Lowell Mellett (President's Office of Facts and Figures), Major General Robert C. Richardson, Jr. (Director of Public Relations, War Department) and the undersigned were invited in order to answer questions proposed by leading journalists and publishers. Transcriptions of this (and a second) forum were sent by the National Press Club to all publishing media in the U.S. for information, but not for publication.



On 17 March, 1941, the Chief of Naval Operations, in furtherance of the voluntary censorship campaign, issued a letter to the Naval Service<sup>9</sup> amplifying the intent of voluntary censorship, attaching a digest of existing security regulations, and applying interpretations in clarification of the Navy's public relations policy: "To keep the public informed of the activities of the Navy, as compatible with military security."

The undersigned subsequently was designated to follow up on this campaign: at the second Forum of the National Press Club, 10 April 1941, in an address before the annual convention of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Washington, D.C. 18 April 1941; in a national radio forum with three prominent New York editors on CBS "People's Platform", New York City, 19 April 1941; in an address at the annual convention of the National Association of Broadcasters, St. Louis, Mo., 13 May 1941; in a panel discussion (again with Mr. Mellett and Major Gen. Richardson) for Mid-Western editors at the University of Missouri, 14 May 1941; and by addresses at numerous other, less formal meetings.

The foregoing steps, supplemented by considerable correspondence and by discussions in U.S. trade journals of the publishing world, did not entirely solve the many problems of voluntary censorship. There were lapses and errors in judgement, not all of which were on the part of the press or due to the voluntary system. However in the May 3, 1941 issue of EDITOR & PUBLISHER, the leading article, which was on Voluntary Censorship, noted that:

"In both the Navy and War Departments, newspapermen assigned to coverage say access is not as free today as it was a few months ago; yet it is agreed that the news product is greater - more releases are issued daily and press conferences are conducted with greater regularity than in the past...Commander Thurber describes it as 'more constructive coverage, with emphasis on news which does not run head-on into the categories suggested by Secretary Knox'...Cited as evidence that voluntary censorship is workable both branches of the service report an almost universal practice of submitting questionable news for clearance before publication."

And in the SATURDAY EVENING POST of 26 September, 1942, the following conclusion was reached in an article on "Now Your News is Censored":

<sup>9</sup> CNO Serial 247216, prepared by OPR.

"Pearl Harbor had caught neither the military nor the American press with its guard down, so far as censorship was concerned. For more than ten months before that fateful Sunday a full-dress rehearsal of censorship had been carried on. Although bearing the title of 'voluntary co-operation', it actually amounted to a wartime censorship on naval matters...It managed to conceal an extremely important movement of the fleet at one stage; it put our building program into the mystery category; and it allowed the establishment of outposts at remote spots that have never been revealed to this day...

"Whatever its merit or fallacy, Knox's 'voluntary co-operation' did help train the American newspaper editor to police himself and his works, and to recognize the difference between news that would give aid and comfort to the enemy' and news that wouldn't. When (Byron) Price took over the reins of censorship in December, not only did the newspapers and radio have the benefit of this experience but they had been voluntarily operating for the two weeks after Pearl Harbor under a military censorship put into effect by the Army and Navy."

#### SPECIAL PROJECTS.

##### Navy Day, 1940.

The officer in charge of the Administrative Section of OPR branch was secretary of the Navy Department Navy Day Committee. Ground work for the celebration was started in July, in compliance with detailed requests from the Navy League, the Naval Reserve and patriotic organizations.

The slogan for Navy Day, 1940 was "KEEP THE NAVY STRONG". Eleven articles and speeches on the subject of the "Two-Ocean Fleet", and similar appropriate material were distributed to the Naval Service as basic material for press and speeches on Navy Day...

...Cooperation was extended in securing speakers at Navy Day events under the auspices of Naval Reserve organizations, American Legion, Military Order World War and other patriotic organizations, as well as city and state committees. The Maryland Navy Day committee and the Propeller Club of Baltimore sponsored the Navy Day banquet at which Admiral H. R. Stark, Chief of Naval Operations was principal speaker. Other programs of interest were held in the principal large cities.

One of the events of Navy Day which created wide interest was the unveiling of a bronze plaque in honor of William Chauvenet, co-founder of the Naval Academy at Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri.

Industrial Mobilization. Acting upon a suggestion from the late Lieutenant Commander Leslie P. Jacobs, USNR, who entered OPR service in March 1941, letters were prepared for signature of the Chief of Naval Operations and sent in April 1941 to the Commandants of Naval Districts in the United States, directing that arrangements be made for addresses by notable Navy personnel at private industrial plants holding Navy contracts. Lieutenant Commander Jacobs also suggested the awarding of "E"s for excellence of production, an idea which was formalized later under the Industrial Incentive Division, of OOR.

Liaison with Bureau of Public Relations, War Department. Close liaison was maintained with the public relations personnel assigned the War Department. With the reporting in February 1941, of Major General Robert C. Richardson, Jr., as Director of Public Relations, War Department, interchange of ideas increased. The personality and ability of that officer added greatly to the voluntary censorship campaign initiated by the Navy, and rapidly furthered by the Army. In the establishment of this pleasant liaison, there were many benefits that became evident when service public relations came under the test of war conditions.

Security. The growth of Navy public relations during the period under review added to the volume of work placed on the Security Branch, Office of Naval Intelligence, which was responsible, among other duties, for security clearance of all OPR projects. This branch was conveniently located adjacent to OPR and was in charge of Commander (now Captain) J. S. Phillips, USN, with Lieutenant Commander (now Captain) E.S. Barnhardt, USN (Ret), as his deputy. Cooperation of these officers in timely clearance was outstanding, and their suggestions for time-saving methods were invaluable as the workload on OPR increased.

#### COMMENTS.

Certain organizational and administrative problems for future planning of Navy public relations are evident from the preceding summary. Three are noted briefly.

a. Training. A school, or course, is recommended for public relations personnel, the curriculum to include

instruction in selected aspects of the art of public relations, the Navy's organization, the Navy's policy, and naval strategy and tactics. Arrangements for attendance of Naval Reserve personnel who are scheduled for public relations duty at the "naval phases" of such a school, and for sending this personnel on Fleet maneuvers, is recommended.

b. Public Media. An OPR program for forum discussions on Navy public relations problems with representatives of the public media is recommended, subjects for discussion to include those necessary for familiarization of representatives of the press, radio, photographic magazine and other public media with the Navy's organization and policy, with the current operating Navy, and with naval strategy and tactics.

c. Security. The mission of Navy public relations - to keep the public informed of the activities of the Navy, as compatible with military security - raises many thorny problems of security in peacetime, and (under voluntary censorship) in wartime. A "code" is suggested for guidance not only of the Navy, but also of the public media - this "code" to be issued to the Navy, and to be included in forum discussions noted in b, preceding. Emphasis on wartime security is requisite. An approach to this latter problem is suggested in order to increase understanding and responsibility; namely, to study available enemy estimates of U.S. losses each action of World War II, with a view to arriving at an approximate "code" of what can and can't be released from a standpoint of security, this "code" and the study from which it resulted to be supplied the Navy and the public media as noted above.

In concluding this summary, the undersigned again desires to pay tribute to his hard-working, effective associates who produced, and who gave Navy public relations a good name in and outside the service during the period under review, and in addition established a sound nucleus for the subsequent, wartime expansion of personnel.

H. R. THURBER.

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#### PERSONNEL AND SPACE SUMMARY, MAY 1941

	<u>On Hand</u>	<u>Coming</u>
Officers	25	13
Civilian Assistants	4	1
Artists	2	2
Civil Service (Clerical Messengers, etc.)	18	20
Yeomen	3	2
Marines	3	0
Space (Rooms)	9	5

Approved

Sam Luthip

Professor

Date

Jan 27, 1968